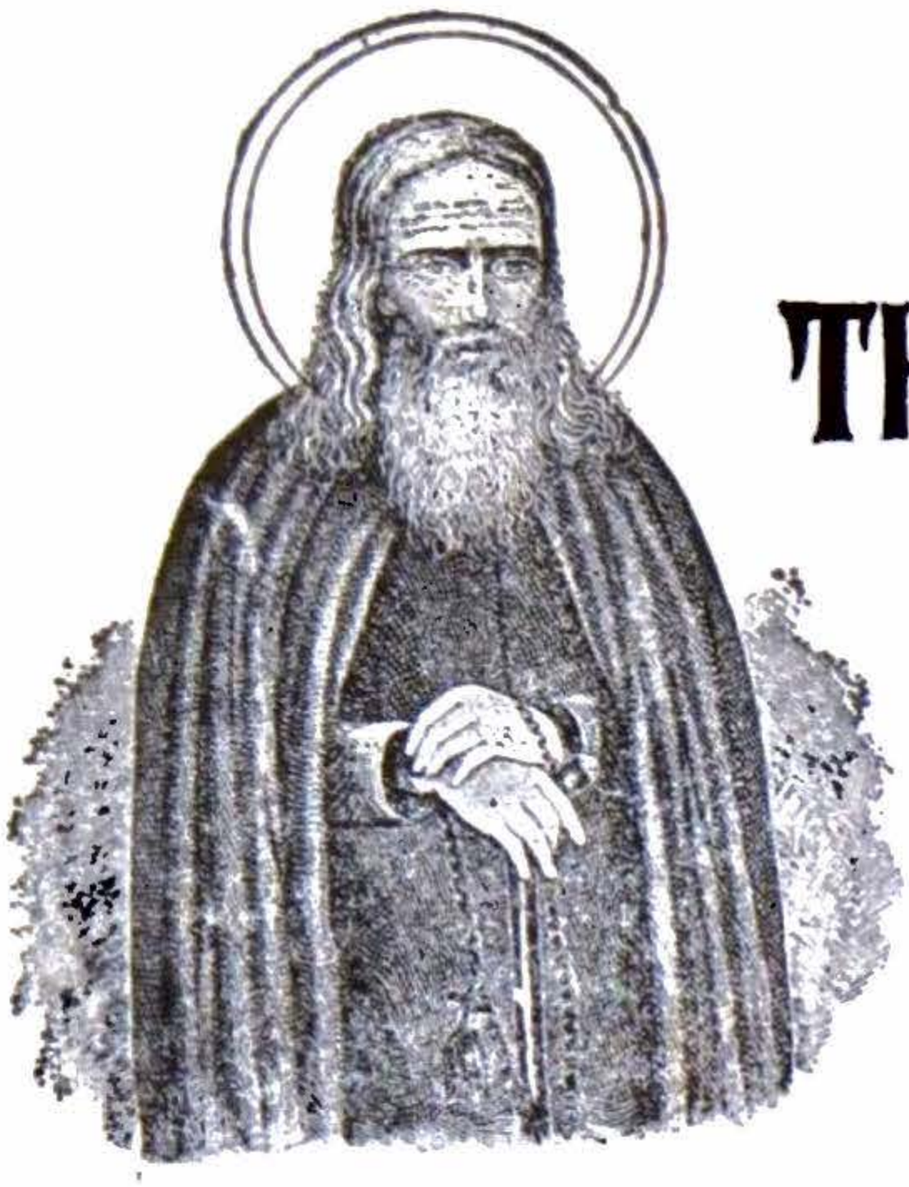
THE ORTHODOX WORD

January - February, 1977 $1.25



THE ORTHODOX WORD

A Bimonthly Periodical

OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF
SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John* (*Maximovitch*), Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

PLATINA, CALIFORNIA 96076

1977, vol. 13, no. 1 (72)
January-February

ISSN 0030-5839

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All unsigned articles are written by the fathers of the St. Herman Brotherhood.

MICROFILM copies of all back issues and of individual articles are available from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI., 48106.

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Published bimonthly by the Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood. Second-class postage paid at Platina, California. Yearly subscription $7, two years $12, three years $16. Office of Publication: Beegum Gorge Road, Platina, California.

All inquiries should be directed to:

THE ORTHODOX WORD, PLATINA, CALIFORNIA, 96076, U.S.A.

Fifty Years of the Catacomb Church of Russia

INTRODUCTION TO A FORTHCOMING BOOK OF THE SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA BROTHERHOOD

ON JULY 16/29, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, the then acting Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne of Moscow, issued his infamous "Declaration" of the loyalty of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Soviet government and solidarity with its "joys" and "sorrows." This document was published in the official Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* on August 6/19 of the same year, and was the overt cause of the fundamental division which occurred then in the Russian Church and has lasted up to the present day. In the words of a church historian of this period (himself a "Sergianist"), the year of the Declaration was "a turning point. Up until now the whole life of the church proceeds under the sign of this year" (A. Krasnov-Levitin, *Memoirs,* YMCA Press, 1977, p. 91, in Russian).

This division is not merely one between two totally independent church organizations (though it is that also); more basically it is a division between two entirely different views of what the Church of Christ is and how it should

act in this sinful world while conducting its children to the banks of the eternal sinless life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

One view, that of the present-day Moscow Patriarchate, to which the name of "Sergianism" has been most fittingly applied, sees the Church first of all as an *organization* whose outward form must be preserved at any cost; disobedience to or separation from this organization is regarded as an act of "schism" or even "sectarianism." The apologists for Sergianism, both within and outside Russia, continually emphasize that Metropolitan Sergius' policy "preserved" the hierarchy, the church organization, the church services, the possibility of receiving the Holy Mysteries, and that this is the chief business of the church or even its whole reason for existing. Such apologies, products of the general decline of the Orthodox church consciousness in our times, are themselves symptoms of the ecclesiastical disease of Sergianism, of the loss of contact with the spiritual roots of Orthodox Christianity and the replacement of *living and whole Orthodoxy* by outward and "canonical" forms. This mentality is perhaps the chief cause for the spread of Protestant sects in present-day Russia: the mere semblance of the primacy of spiritual concerns (even if devoid of true Christian content) is enough to overwhelm the mere attachment to outward forms among many millions of Russians who are convinced that the Sergianist church (because it is the only one visible) *is* Orthodoxy.

The other view, that of the True-Orthodox or Catacomb Church of Russia, sees the first responsibility of the Orthodox Church to be *faithfulness to Christ and to the true Spirit of Orthodoxy,* at whatever external cost. This mentality does not at all disdain external forms; we know that the Catacomb Church has preserved the Divine services and the church hierarchy down to our own day. The external cost of the Catacomb Church's faithfulness to true Orthodoxy has been the loss of immediate influence over the masses of the Russian people, many of whom do not even know of its existence and the majority of whom would not know where or how to enter into contact with its members. But the loss of outward influence has as its counterpart a moral and spiritual authority which cannot be appreciated by those who judge these matters outwardly, but which will become evident when freedom returns to Russia.

The mentality of the Catacomb Church in the USSR is best described in the words of its own members. Here is how I. M. Andreyev, an active participant in the church events of 1927 and later, describes the formation of the Cata-

comb Church in those years.

"According to the testimony of the close friend of Patriarch Tikhon, the professor and doctor of medicine M. A. Zhizhilenko (the former chief physician of the Taganka prison in Moscow), the Patriarch, not long before his death, becoming convinced, with great fear, that the boundary of the 'political' demands of the Soviet regime would go beyond the boundaries of faithfulness to the Church and Christ, expressed the idea that probably the only way for the Orthodox Russian Church to preserve faithfulness to Christ would be, in the near future, to *go into the catacombs.* Therefore, Patriarch Tikhon blessed Prof. Zhizhilenko to accept secret monasticism, and then, in the near future, in case the leading hierarchs of the Church should betray Christ and give over to the Soviet regime the spiritual freedom of the Church, to become a secret bishop.

"In 1927, when Metropolitan Sergius issued his Declaration, after which the church schism occurred, Prof. Zhizhilenko fulfilled the will of Patriarch Tikhon and became the first secret catacomb bishop, Maxim of Serpukhov.

"After the schism of 1927, the followers of Metropolitan Sergius, who accepted his Declaration, began to be called 'Sergianists,' while those who remained faithful to the Orthodox Church, who did not accept the Declaration and separated from Metropolitan Sergius, began to be called 'Josephites' (after Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd). This latter name, given by the 'Sergianists,' did not define the position, either in essence or formally, of those who protested. Apart from Metropolitan Joseph, other hierarchs, the most outstanding ones, together with their flocks, departed from communion with Metropolitan Sergius. The religious-moral authority of those who protested and separated was so high, and their qualitative superiority was so clear, that for the future historian of the Church there can be no doubt whatever of the correctness of the opponents of Metropolitan Sergius. These latter could more correctly be called faithful 'Tikhonites.' And the activities of Metropolitan Sergius and those with him must be characterized as a *neo-renovationist schism.*

"All those who protested against the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius were arrested by the Soviet regime as 'counter-revolutionaries'; they were shot or sent to concentration camps and exile. At interrogations the jubilant Chekist-interrogators with sarcasm and evil joy would prove the 'strict canonicity' of Metropolitan Sergius and his Declaration, which 'has not altered either canons or dogmas.' The mass executions, persecutions and tortures which descended upon the faithful of Christs' Church are beyond description.

"For the True Orthodox Church there was left no alternative but to *go into the catacombs.*

"The spiritual father who gave birth to the very idea of the Catacomb Church was Patriarch Tikhon. In the first years of its existence the Catacomb Church had neither organization nor administration, was dispersed physically and geographically, and was united only by the name of Metropolitan Peter. The first Catacomb bishop Maxim was arrested in 1928 and sent to the Solovki concentration camp; in 1930 he was sent from the camp to Moscow and shot.

"Beginning in 1928 in the Solovki and Svir concentration camps, in the 'Belbaltlag' camp, and in many camps in Siberia, there began to be performed many secret ordinations. (In the Solovki camp, where I was, these were performed by Bishops Maxim, Victor, Hilarion, and Nectary.)

"After the death of Metropolitans Peter and Cyril (both died in exile in 1936), the spiritual and administrative head of the Catacomb Church — which by this time had achieved a certain degree of organization — became Metropolitan Joseph (even though he was in exile).

"At the end of 1938, precisely for his leadership and guidance of the secret Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Joseph was executed.

"After his death, the Catacomb Church began yet more strictly to keep its secrets, especially the names and locations of its spiritual leaders.

"*I will not speak of the mystery to Thy enemies* — it is with such a motto that brief information has appeared from time to time on the life of this secret Church." (I. M. Andreyev, *Brief Review of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days,* Jordanville, 1951, pp. 70-72.)

There exists a mass of materials documenting this early period in the history of the Catacomb Church, both in the epistles of bishops and others who separated from Metropolitan Sergius, and in the memoirs and other accounts of individual members of the Catacomb Church who escaped from the Soviet Union during World War II. Many of these documents are contained in the two volumes of *Russia's New Martyrs,* compiled by Archpriest Michael Polsky (Jordanville, 1949 and 1957); the most important of these, and a number from other sources, are presented in Parts II and III of this book, most of them for the first time in English.

On the eve of World War II, the persecution of religion in the Soviet Union reached its fiercest peak, when even the "Sergianist" church organization came near to liquidation, and the Catacomb Church disappeared entirely from

view. Only a few of the most notable collaborators with the Soviets, such as Metropolitan Sergius himself, escaped imprisonment or banishment, a fact which led to the charge of Boris Talantov thirty years later that "Metropolitan Sergius by his adaptation and lies saved no one and nothing, except his own person."

When Stalin, in order to take advantage of the patriotic and religious feelings of the Russian people in the war against the Germans, opened a number of the closed churches and allowed the election of a "Patriarch" in 1943, a new period began in Church-State relations, when the Moscow Patriarchate became, in effect, the "State Church" of the Soviet government, spreading Communist propaganda throughout the world in the name of religion, and categorically denying the existence of any religious persecution whatever in the Soviet Union. The mere existence of a Catacomb Orthodox Church opposed to this policy, of course, could have a disastrous effect on the policy, especially if it became widely known abroad. All groups of Catacomb Orthodox were mercilessly uprooted by the Soviet authorities when discovered, and their members were given long prison terms. Most of the little information we have from this period of the history of the Catacomb Church in Russia comes from the Soviet press; but almost nothing is known to this day about the organization and leadership of the Catacomb Church during this time.

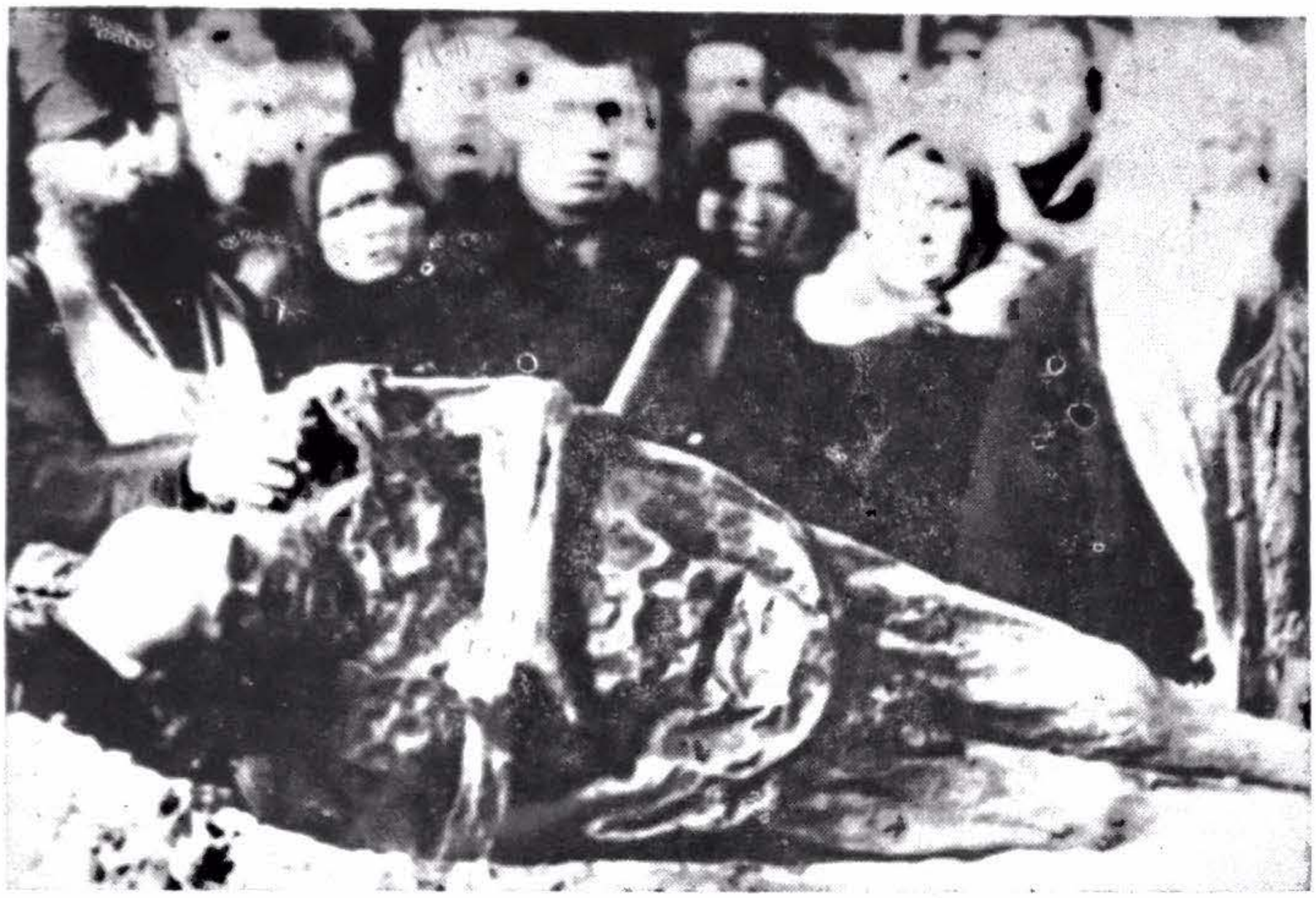
Under Khrushchev in 1959 a new and intense persecution of religion was undertaken in the USSR, inaugurating the most recent period of Russian church history, a period in which the Sergianist puppet church organization is itself being used to liquidate Orthodoxy in Russia, while continuing its Communist propaganda abroad and its now totally incredible assertions of the absence of any persecution of religion in the USSR. A majority of the remaining Sergianist churches, monasteries, and seminaries have been closed in this period, and an especially fierce persecution has been conducted against "unregistered" church bodies such as the Catacomb Orthodox Church, which is known to the Soviet authorities under the names of "Josephites," "Tikhonites," and the "True-Orthodox Church." The persecution was especially fierce in the years 1959-1964; since the downfall of Khrushchev it has been less intense, but it continues all the same, especially against the "unregistered" bodies.

In this most recent period a new spirit of boldness has entered church life in Russia; this, coupled with a greatly increased freedom of communication between the USSR and the free world, has produced what, beginning with a few isolated protests in the early 1960's, has now become a wave of protest and indignation from believers in Russia directed against the religious persecutions of

the Soviet government and the spineless apologies for it of the official church organization. The Open Letter to Patriarch Alexis of the Moscow priests Gleb Yakunin and Nicholas Eshliman in 1965, the articles on "Sergianism" by Boris Talantov in 1968, the righteous protests against the church policy of the Moscow Patriarchate from Orthodox Christians as diverse as Archbishop Ermogen and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and most recently the desperate cries of conscience of Father Dimitry Dudko and the new church history of Lev Regelson (who has given the first sympathetic account of the "Josephites" from within the Moscow Patriarchate) — have led to a veritable "crisis of Sergianism" in Russia; the chief factor, it would seem, that now prevents a new break with the Moscow Patriarchate on the scale of the "Josephite" movement of 1927 is a certain fear of the specter of "schism" and "sectarianism," coupled with a widespread ignorance of the actual state and mentality of the present-day Caacomb Church. The most striking testimonies regarding the meaning of "Sergianism" from within the Moscow Patriarchate today are included in Part IV of this book.

Finally, the past few years, beginning with the death of Patriarch Alexis in 1971, have seen a certain re-emergence of the Catacomb Church itself in Russia. In particular, the two "catacomb documents" of 1971 have given us the first real view in forty years of the *mentality* of the present-day Catacomb Church, which would seem to be quite sober and not at all 'sectarian" or "fanatical" (an impression which is only reinforced by the just-printed catacomb epistle of 1962, the very existence of which was known up to now only by a few people in the Soviet Union); the testimony of A. Krasnov-Levitin after his exile from the Soviet Union in 1974 has provided us the first real information since 1938 concerning *the episcopate and the chief hierarch* of the Catacomb Church; and the information from the Soviet press in 1976 concerning the trial of Archimandrite Gennady is the most striking evidence since before World War II of the actual *activity* of the Catacomb Church and its astonishing scope. These documents are contained in Part V of this book.

This book should not be regarded as a mere "apology" for the Catacomb Church; our attempt has been to be a little more "objective" than that. In fact, the present historical moment, the eve of the 50th anniversary of the "Declaration" that divided Russian Orthodoxy in the 20th century, offers an unparalleled opportunity for an "objective" view of the past half-century of church life for us who belong to the only free and uncompromised part of the Russian Church. The soul of Russia is speaking today, more clearly than at any time since the beginning of Sergianism; but the pain and difficulty of speaking



The blasphemous "investigation" of the relics of St. Theodosius-- see p. 11.

make it almost impossible for those inside the Soviet Union to understand the message fully. In particular, those within the Moscow Patriarchate find themselves still enclosed in an "enchanted circle" of inherited opinions about the church organization, which will probably not be broken until the realization finally dawns upon them that the Catacomb Church of Russia is not primarily a rival "church organization" which demands a change of episcopal allegiance, but is first of all the standard-bearer of *faithfulness to Christ,* which inspires a different attitude towards the Church and its organization than now prevails throughout much of the Orthodox world. This realization will perhaps not dawn until the downfall of the godless regime; but when it does, the Sergianist church organization and its whole philosophy of being will crumble to dust. In this light, it is surely no exaggeration to say that the future of Russia, if it is to be Orthodox, belongs to the Catacomb Church.

A deliberate attempt has been made, in the appendix to this volume where the sources for the history of the Catacomb Church are presented, to indicate the "bias" of the authors, whether "Sergianist" or "Josephite." There have, of course, been exaggerations on both sides. To the future historian of the Russian Church there will indeed be no doubt (in fact, the church history of Lev Regelson already proves it) that the Josephites were correct and the Sergianists were fatally wrong. But the significance of the Catacomb Church does not lie in its "correctness"; it lies in its preservation of *the true spirit of Orthodoxy,* the spirit of freedom in Christ. Sergianism was not merely "wrong" in its choice of church policy, it was something far worse: it was a betrayal of Christ based on agreement with the spirit of this world. It is the inevitable result when church policy is guided by earthly logic and not by the mind of Christ.

ARCHBISHOP PACHOMIUS OF CHERNIGOV

Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov

HIS BROTHER, ARCHBISHOP ABERCIUS, AND THEIR EPISTLE

(For the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Archbishop Pachomius)

THERE WERE THREE brother-bishops in the Kedrov family, natives of the Viatka region. The father, Peter Kedrov, was a church psalm-reader and gave his sons a good church unbringing and theological education.

The oldest son, Peter, the future hierarch-confessor Pachomius of Chernigov, was born exactly 100 years ago, in 1877. He was serious, humble and meek by nature, pensive and church-oriented as he was growing up. Having completed preparatory theological schooling, he entered the Kazan Theological Academy at the time when its rector was Anthony Khrapovitsky, the future Metropolitan and first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia.

The school spirit at that time was exceedingly fervent; it was truly one spiritual family, or rather a little army of monastically-minded students, and its heart was the young rector-bishop. With unpretentious love he inspired his disciples with an unquenchable thirst for applying Orthodox truth to life, and this at a time when revolutionary ideas were making headway in the thoroughly

Orthodox Holy Russia. The students were thoroughly prepared, knowing well the spirit of the times, and were aflame to go into the world and teach the gospel of truth. The Academy's church services, performed according to the Typicon, in which all took part, were a living fount of inspiration for the students. Young Peter's part was the office of candlelighter, which he fulfilled with the profound seriousness so characterisic of him.

Being a little too zealous in his religiousness, Peter decided to fulfill literally the Lord's commandment: *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee* (Matt. 5:29), and one night he attempted to burn out his right eye with a candle. His roommate at this time was Basil Maximenko, the future Archbishop Vitaly of Jordanville. He was awakened in the middle of the night by the grinding of teeth of his roommate, who was trying in this way to endure the pain. Seeing what had happened, he put up a cry and saved his comrade's eye. However, the burns were so serious that it required surgery on the eyelid and eyebrow, and the scar remained for the rest of his life.

In 1898 Peter graduated from the Academy, and Metropolitan Anthony tonsured him a monk, naming him Pachomius; upon his transfer to the diocese of Volhynia, Metropolitan Anthony took the young hieromonk with him, and here the latter did missionary work residing in the Derman Monastery near St. Job's Pochaev Lavra. In 1911 he was consecrated bishop of Novgorod-Seversky, a vicar of Chernigov, and soon he was elevated to the see of the ancient Diocese of Chernigov itself, renowned for the holy relics of St. Theodosius, Bishop of Chernigov, who had been canonized in 1896. During the Revolution he took part in the council of 1917-18 and on October 30, 1917, delivered a report concerning the procedure of electing the patriarch; in this report he reflected the opinion of his preceptor, Metropolitan Anthony, whom he not only dearly loved, but whose pastoral zeal became engraved in his heart as well.

This pastoral awareness stayed with him his whole life. This is clearly seen in his Epistle against the "legalization" of 1927 as well as in his pastoral activity in the period after the Russian Civil War. When the White Army with his beloved Metropolitan Anthony retreated and the Red Army took full control of Russia, the country was in total collapse, with transportation paralyzed, but this did not stop the good shepherd. With his archpastor's staff, Archbishop Pachomius visited all the churches in his diocese *on foot*! Since the left bank of the Dniepr River, according to the new administrative division, belonged to the Chernigov diocese, he also had to visit the outskirts of Kiev, and thus he visited the Kiev Caves Lavra also.

ARCHBISHOP PACHOMIUS OF CHERNIGOV

In about 1922 the Communist authorities throughout the whole of Russia began a blasphemous "investigation" of holy relics, opening the shrines of many saints with an attempt to prove "scientifically" to the public the assumed falsity of the saints' incorruptibility. This movement produced frightful spectacles of sacrilege, evoking enormous protests and resistance by the people, many of whom suffered imprisonment and banishment. But the "scientific investigators" were themselves put to shame, for they themselves had to admit the incorruptibility of the relics, which they could not explain scientifically, and this was printed in all the newspapers. The believing Orthodox rejoiced at the outcome, but the authorities nevertheless did their work — they placed the saints' relics in anti-religious museums as "mummies." This campaign caused some conscientious bishops even to die out of desperate sorrow at the mockery of the saints, as happened with Archbishop Anatole of Irkutsk.

Archbishop Pachomius too had to suffer in this campaign. The relics of St. Theodosius were required to be stripped and exposed to the public. Usually the atheistic commission of "scientists" would shake and toss the relics, but Archbishop Pachomius stood his ground and, having put on epitrachelion and cuffs, did the unwrapping of the relics himself, shedding painful tears in the presence of a large crowd of believers, who wept and sobbed, seeing that the Communists would not leave even the dead alone. The late Archbishop Leonty of Chile, a close friend of Archbishop Pachomius, has preserved for us a rare photograph of the opening of the relics of St. Theodosius of Chernigov, showing the grieving Archbishop Pachomius holding the relics, surrounded by his grief-stricken flock. After this the relics were confiscated, brought to Petrograd and exposed in an anti-religious museum together with dead rats and fossilized bones. But the believers, having bribed the guards, secretly served catacomb services before the relics in the middle of the night. Evidently in connection with this Archbishop Pachomius was arrested.

Afer his release in 1923 he could not return to his diocese but found shelter in the St. Daniel Monastery of Moscow, whose abbot was the last rector of the Moscow Theological Academy, Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyev), who still managed somehow to keep the school going. Archbishop Theodore gave shelter to many banished bishops; at times there were as many as ten bishops living in the monastery, which after 1927 became a center of the anti-Sergian clergy. Archbishop Theodore was in opposition even to Patriarch Tikhon over what he considered the latter's too close contact with the Communist government. In this monastery the Novice Basil, the future Archbishop Leonty of Chile,

met Archbishop Pachomius and saw him taking part in a council with Patriarch Tikhon. He even received a letter from Archbishop Pachomius (which has been preserved) in which the confessor, giving his blessing, says that he doubts "that the Lord will make us meet again."

Archbishop Pachomius' younger brother Procopius, also a theologian, before becoming a monk was teaching New Testament in the Vilna Theological Seminary. Becoming tonsured with the name Abercius, he was soon made bishop of Zhitomir and resided in the Theophany Monastery there. He was well received by his flock there. He was young, with blond wavy hair, very pious, energetic, friendly, and looked full of life and health. He was strong in faith, kind, accessible, and was greatly loved by all. He always gave sermons. He served with great solemnity, and liked to make processions over long distances, visiting towns and villages, singing all the way with all the people, giving sermons in which he openly indicated the path by which Christians should go in those perilous times for faith. Soon, however, the processions were forbidden. He also loved all-night vigils, ending at dawn, and had them often, gathering many people for them. Then he was arrested, broken down, then released, only to be arrested again after his co-authorship with his brother of the Epistle against the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, afer which he was never heard of again.

In 1927 the infamous Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius with its "legalization" of the Church (under Soviet terms) gave the final blow to Orthodox believers, who had only rejoiced as long as the persecutions came from outside but did not take hold of the Church's heart. Archbishop Pachomius was one of the first to protest, writing, together with his brother Archbishop Abercius, the important document printed below, which was addressed not directly to Metropolitan Sergius but to the faithful in general. It gives a thorough picture of the church conditions which resulted after the Declaration.

Shortly after writing this Epistle, Archbishop Pachomius was arrested and sent first to Solovki, then in 1931 to the slave-labor camp at Mai-Guba that was building the Baltic-White Sea Canal. Prof. Nesterov, who was there at this time, relates that Archbishop Pachomius arrived there almost an invalid, with paralysis of the facial nerves. Because of his physical weakness he could not be used in the building and was therefore sent in 1932 to a camp for invalids at Kuzema; but even here he was sent out to physical labor which was very difficult for him: carrying water, baking bread, etc.

Prof. Nesterov relates an incident from this period which is very characteristic of the Archbishop. One of the imprisoned professors was working in the office of the Kuzema camp as a scribe. He had to compile a list in quick

order of those who had been sent to a different work point in the Kuzema camp and had to work all night. The professor was tormented and irritable. In the morning Archbishop Pachomius came into the office and asked the professor whether he knew where and when they were being sent. The professor replied sharply: "You bother me, Vladika!" and added a crude comment. Archbishop Pachomius humbly bowed down to his feet, asking forgiveness for irritating him by his question. The professor became upset and in his turn asked forgiveness of the Archbishop for his crudeness.

In personal conversations with Prof. Nesterov, Archbishop Pachomius often condemned the policy of Metropolitan Sergius more sharply and categorically than in his Epistle. At this time the results of Metropolitan Sergius' policy had become clear, both with regard to the fate of the Church itself in general, and with regard to the banished bishops in particular. In place of the promised legalization, the liquidation of churches and clergy was proceeding at an increasing tempo. Bishops and priests languished in prison without any hope of liberation. Exiles and arrests not only did not cease, but even increased.

Archbishop Pachomius recognized as head of the Church not Metropolitan Sergius, but Metropolitan Cyril, as was logical according to the instructions of Patriarch Tikhon. And when a kind of Church was formed at the places of imprisonment, where an immense number of bishops, priests and believers were to be found, Archbishop Pachomius recognized as the head of this Church Metropolitan Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich, who at that time was imprisoned and working as a scribe at the women's concentration camp at Mai-Guba.

The last exile of Archbishop Pachomius was spent at Yaransk, where he lived under house arrest in the home of his brother, Priest A. When once the GPU came to arrest the brother because of him, Vladika Pachomius could endure no more of his sufferings and had a mental breakdown. Nevertheless, he was taken prisoner, and according to his nephew, A.A., who lives now in America, he was shot in prison. Another source (Polsky) indicates that the two brother-bishops were shot in 1937 because of their opposition to Metropolitan Sergius. In the absence of Archbishop Pachomius, all churches of the Chernigov diocese commemorated Metropolitan Sergius until 1930, and those who followed their archpastor in refusing to accept the "legalization" had to go to Kiev, to the community of Abbess Sophia, to receive the Holy Mysteries.

(Continued on page 39)

VITA PATRUM

Orthodoxy in 6th-Century Gaul

THE 20TH-CENTURY Orthodox Christian will find little that is strange in the Christianity of 6th-century Gaul; in fact, if he himself has entered deeply into the piety and spirit of Orthodoxy as it has come down even to our days, he will find himself very much at home in the Christian world of St. Gregory of Tours. The externals of Christian worship — church structures and decoration, iconography, vestments, services — after centuries of development, had attained essentially the form they retain today in the Orthodox Church. In the West, especially after the final Schism of the Church of Rome in 1054, all these things changed. The more tradition-minded East, by the very fact that it has changed so little over the centuries even in outward forms, is naturally much closer to the early Christian West than is the Catholic-Protestant West of recent centuries, which had departed far from its Orthodox roots even before the present-day "post-Christian" era arrived.

Some historians of this period, such as O.M. Dalton in the Introduction to his translation of St. Gregory's *History of the Franks* (Oxford, 1927, two volumes), find much in Christian Gaul that is "Eastern" in form. This observation is true as far as it goes, but it is made from a modern Western perspective that is not quite precise. A more precise formulation of this observation would be the following:

In the 6th century there was one common Christianity, identical in dogma and spirit in East and West, with some differences in form which, at this early period, were no more than minor and incidental. The whole Church met together in councils, both before and after this century, to decide disputed dogmatic questions and confess the one true Faith. There were numerous pil-

grims and travellers, especially "Westerners" going to the East, but also "Easterners" going to the West, and they did not find each other strangers, or the Christian faith or piety or customs of the distant land alien to what they knew at home. The local differences amounted to no more than exist today between the Orthodox Christians of Russia and Greece.

The estrangement between East and West belongs to future centuries. It becomes painfully manifest (although there were signs of it before this) only with the age of the Crusades (1096 and later), and the reason for it is to be found in a striking spiritual, psychological and cultural change which occurred in the West precisely at the time of the Schism. Concerning this a noted Roman Catholic scholar, Yves Congar, has perceptively remarked: "A Christian of the fourth or fifth century would have felt less bewildered by the forms of piety current in the 11th century than would his counterpart of the 11th century in the forms of the 12th. The great break occurred in the transition period from the one to the other century. This change took place only in the West where, sometime between the end of the 11th and the end of the 12th century, everything was somehow transformed. This profound alteration of view did not take place in the East, where, in some respects, Christian matters are still today what they were then — and what they were in the West before the end of the 11th century." (Yves Congar, O.P., *After Nine Hundred Years,* Fordham University Press, 1959, p. 39, where he is actually paraphrasing Dom A. Wilmart.)

One might cite numerous manifestations of this remarkable change in the West: the beginnings of Scholasticism or the academic-analytical approach to knowledge as opposed to the traditional-synthetic approach of Orthodoxy; the beginning of the age of romance," when fables and legends were introduced into Christian texts; the new naturalism in art (Giotto) which destroyed iconography; the new "personal" concept of sanctity (Francis of Assisi), unacceptable to Orthodoxy, which gave rise to later Western "mysticism" and eventually to the innumerable sects and pseudo-religious movements of modern times; and so forth. The cause of this change is something that cannot be evident to a Roman Catholic scholar: it is the loss of grace which follows on separation from the Church of Christ and which puts one at the mercy of the "spirit of the times" and of purely logical and human ways of life and thought. When the Crusaders sacked and desecrated Constantinople in 1204 (an act unthinkable in earlier centuries for the Christian West), they only revealed that they had become total strangers to Orthodoxy, and therefore to the Eastern Christians, and that they had irretrievably lost what their own ancestors in 6th-century Gaul had preserved as the apple of their eye: the unbroken tradition of true Christianity.

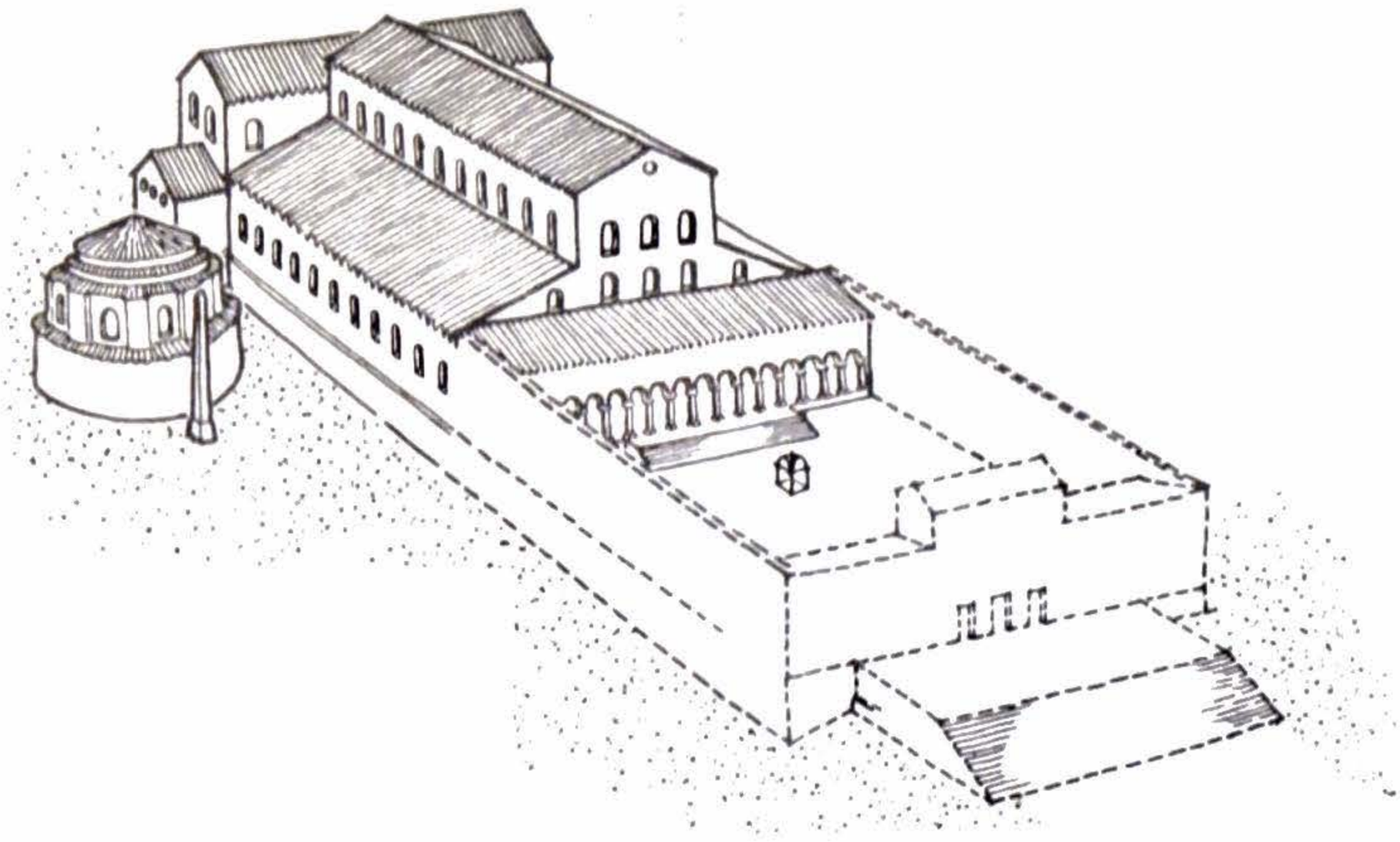
THE ORTHODOX WORD

We shall mention here only some of the most obvious Orthodox forms of 6th-century Gaul, as a helpful background to the reading of St. Gregory's *Life of the Fathers.*

THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE: THE BASILICA

WHEN CHRISTIANS finally emerged from the catacombs in the reign of St. Constantine the Great, it was natural that they should begin to build churches in great numbers. For nearly three centuries, under conditions of persecution and the threat of persecution, the basic forms of Christian faith and piety had been nurtured literally underground and in private home churches; now, with Orthodox Christianity first given freedom, and then recognized as the religion of the State, Christian houses of worship were erected in conspicuous places in all cities and major towns of the Roman Empire, in East and West alike. The type of building found most suitable to the needs of Christian worship was not the pagan temple, where idols were worshipped in dark and confining interiors, but the Roman basilica or "royal hall," a secular building used and adapted for various public functions, in many of which the emperor himself would be present (whence the name). Such buildings are known from the second century B.C., but the first Christian basilica dates only from shortly before the time of St. Constantine, and the 4th century is the first great age of its construction. For many centuries this was the standard Christian temple both in East and West; in style there is but little variation from Syria to Spain and Britain, from Africa to Germany. It is from the basilica that the Christian temples of later centuries, whether East or West, are derived.

The standard basilica plan includes a long nave (where the believers would stand), usually flanked by aisles on both sides, ending in a semi-circular apse where the sanctuary or altar-area was located; often there was a narthex in the rear and an atrium or courtyard outside with a fountain where the faithful would wash their hands before entering the church. The nave was supported by columns which separated it from the aisles, and the columns were topped by a band of wide windows which gave abundant opaque light (being made of mica or similar material, there being no glass then) which rendered especially bright the iconographic mosaics or (more commonly in Gaul) frescoes which adorned the apse and the upper walls of the basilica. The interior was also ornamented with numerous gold decorations, chandeliers, etc. The basic structure would be of stone or brick, surmounted by a flat ceiling, with open timbers usually visible. Already by the 6th century, the flat roof was often replaced by a dome.



The original Basilica of St. Peter in Rome (5th century)
with atrium and adjoining baptistery
(according to the reconstruction by Krautheimer)

There are a number of excellently preserved basilicas especially from the 5th and 6th centuries in Rome and Ravenna, and many others are well known from foundation remains, excavations, and contemporary descriptions. The first impression created by such buildings is one of majesty and beauty. This is the aspect emphasized in the first detailed descriptions we have of a Christian basilica, that of the Basilica of Tyre in the East (consecrated in 317), in the *Church History* of Eusebius (Book X, 4): "The basilica itself he (the builder) has furnished with beautiful and splendid materials, using unstinted liberality in his disbursements. Its splendor and its majesty surpass description, and the brilliant appearance of the work, its lofty pinnacles reaching to the heavens, and the costly cedars of Lebanon above them. . . the skillful architectural arrangement and the surpassing beauty of each part."

The purpose of such splendor is to inspire and elevate one, to open up a new heavenly world to those born of earth. But the entrance to this world is gained only by those who go on the narrow path of ascetic Christianity. To remind the faithful of this, St. Paulinus had his own verses inscribed over the doors to his basilica in Nola in Italy (early 5th century). Over one door he wrote: "Peace be upon you who enter the sanctuary of Christ with pure minds and peaceful hearts"; over another, together with a representation of the cross: "Behold the wreathed cross of Christ the Lord, set above the entrance hall. It

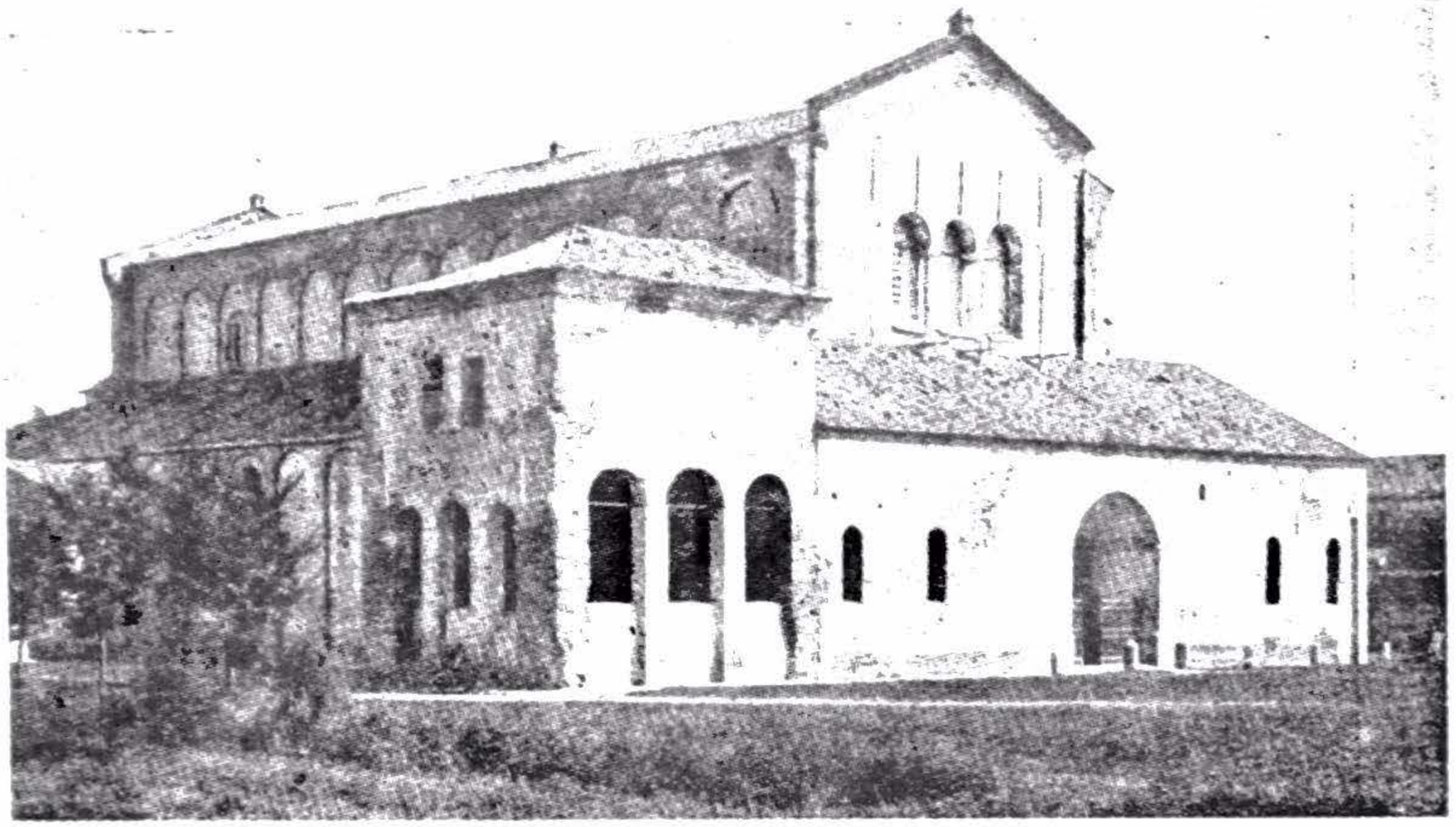
promises high rewards for grinding toil. If you wish to obtain the crown, take up the cross"; and inside one door, visible to the people as they leave: "Each of you that departs from the house of the Lord, after completing your prayers in due order, remove your bodies but remain here in heart." (St Paulinus of Nola, Letter 32.)

Unfortunately, none of the basilicas of Gaul in this period has survived, but from the numerous literary descriptions of them that we do have it is obvious that they were identical in style to those of Rome and the East. From descriptions in the writings of St. Gregory of Tours it has been possible to reconstruct the approximate appearance of the Basilica of St. Martin in his time. He has an interesting description also of the basilica of his native Clermont, built by St. Namatius in the 5th century: "It is 150 feet long, 60 feet wide inside the nave, and 50 feet high as far as the vaulting. It has a rounded apse at the end, and two wings of elegant design (one variation of the basilica-style) on either side. The whole building is constructed in the shape of a cross. It has 42 windows, 70 columns, and eight doorways. In it one is conscious of the fear of God and of a great brightness, and those at prayer are often aware of a most sweet and aromatic odor which is being wafted towards them. Round the sanctuary it has walls which are decorated with mosaic work made of many varieties of marble." *(History of the Franks,* II, 16.)

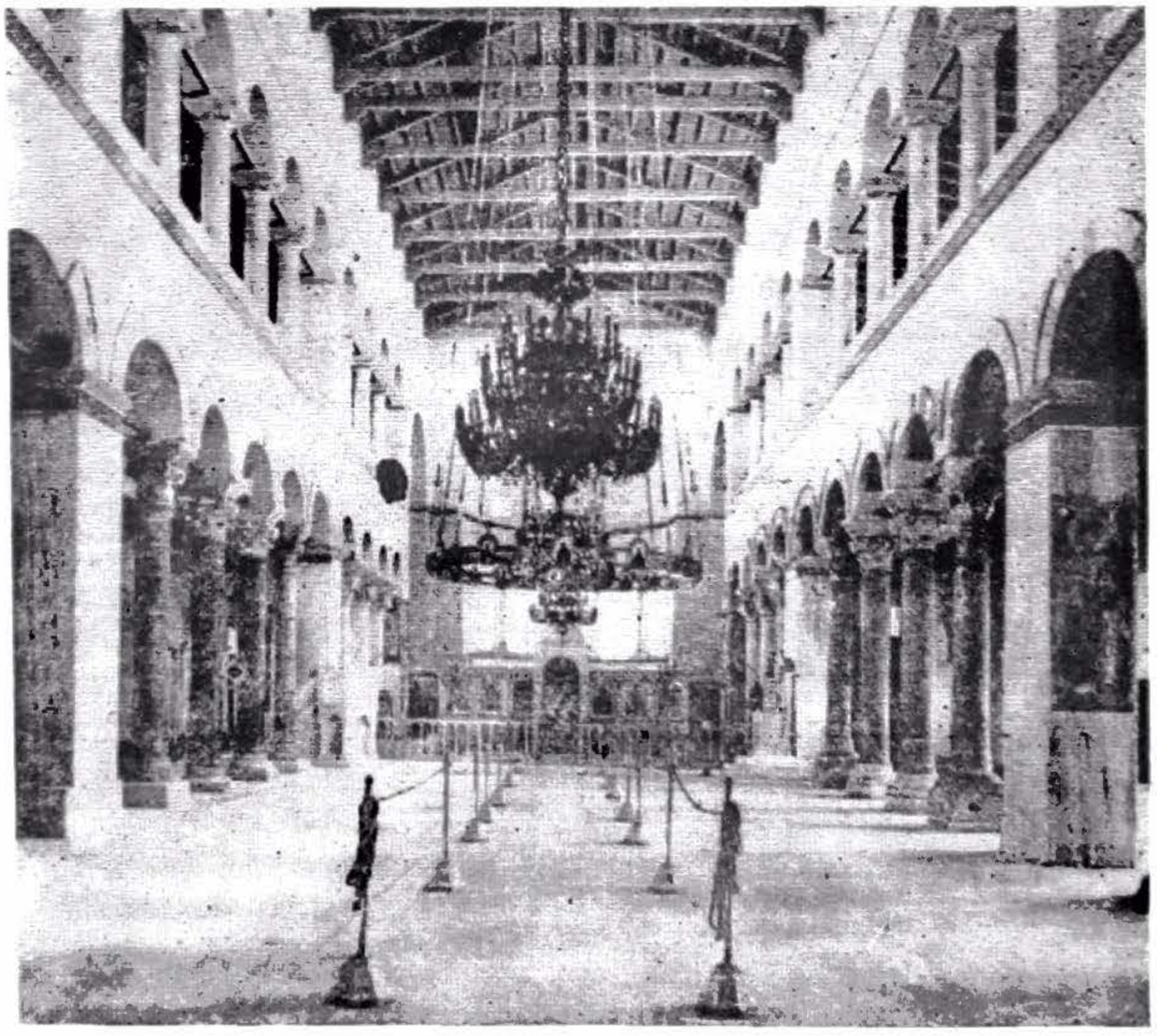
Between the nave and the altar area there was often, even in the earliest Christian basilicas, a kind of screen. A description and explanation of this is given by Eusebius when, in describing the Basilica of Tyre, he ends with "the holy of holies, the altar, and, that it might be inaccessible to the multitude, he enclosed it with wooden lattice-work, accurately wrought with artistic carving, presenting a wonderful sight to the beholders." Evidently, from the very moment the Church left the catacombs, it was felt necessary to screen the holy of holies from the people so that the Mysteries might not be profaned by the ever-present temptation, in times of peace and ease, to take them for granted. This screen, the "chancel," is the beginning of the later iconostasis in the East and the rood-screen in the medieval West. Many traces of the chancel may be seen in the oldest Roman basilicas today, and in all likelihood they were present in the basilicas of Gaul as well.

The altar-tables in the early Christian basilicas were virtually identical with those still used in the Orthodox East, rather than with the later elaborate Latin altars of the West. Made at first usually of wood, and later of stone, they were generally square in shape, as is the oldest surviving altar-table of Gaul, found at Auriol near Marseilles (5th century). The altar-tables visible in the 6th-century mosaics of Ravenna square and entirely hidden by cloth

The Christian Basilica

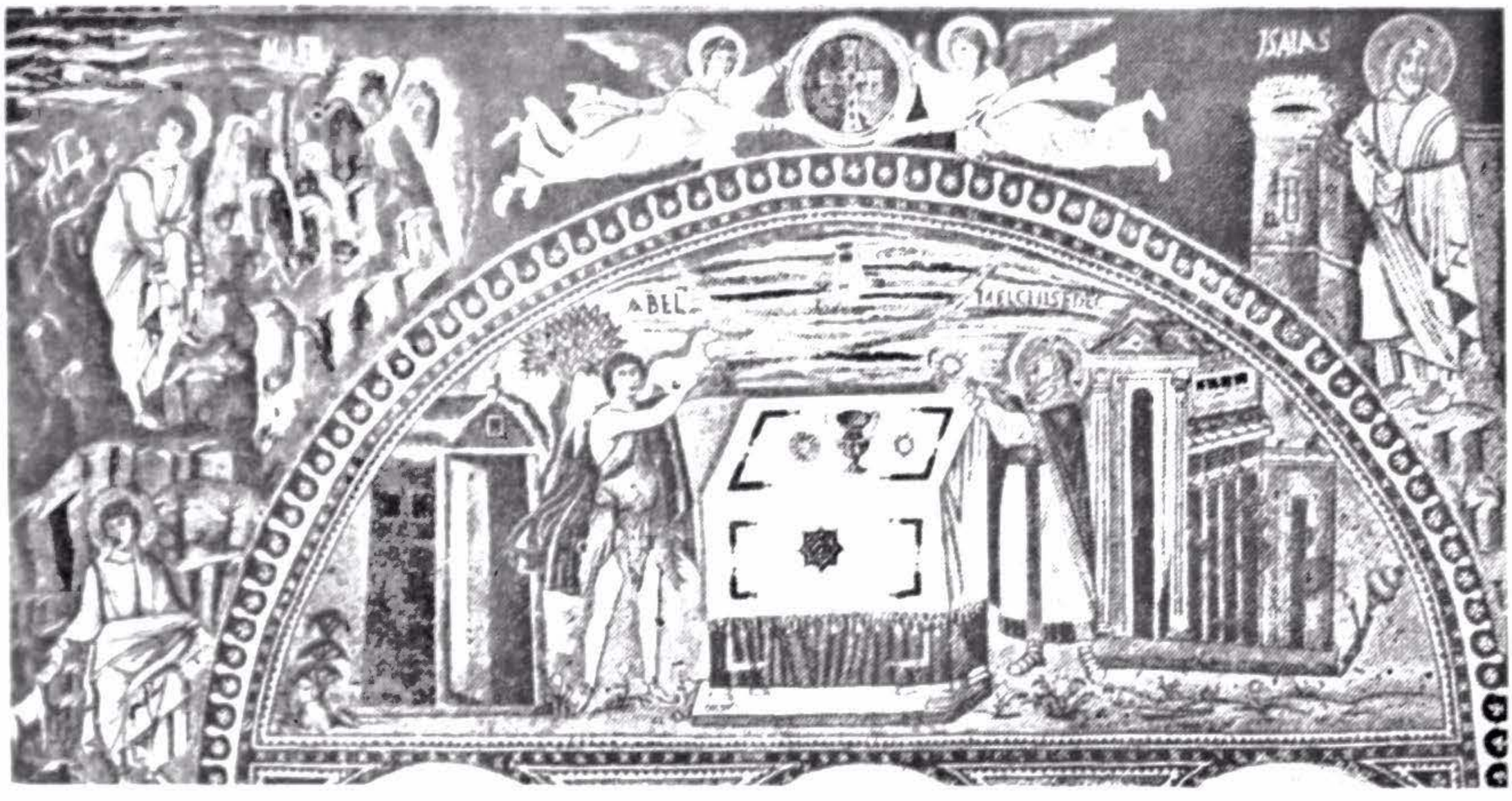


6th-century Basilica of Sant' Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna

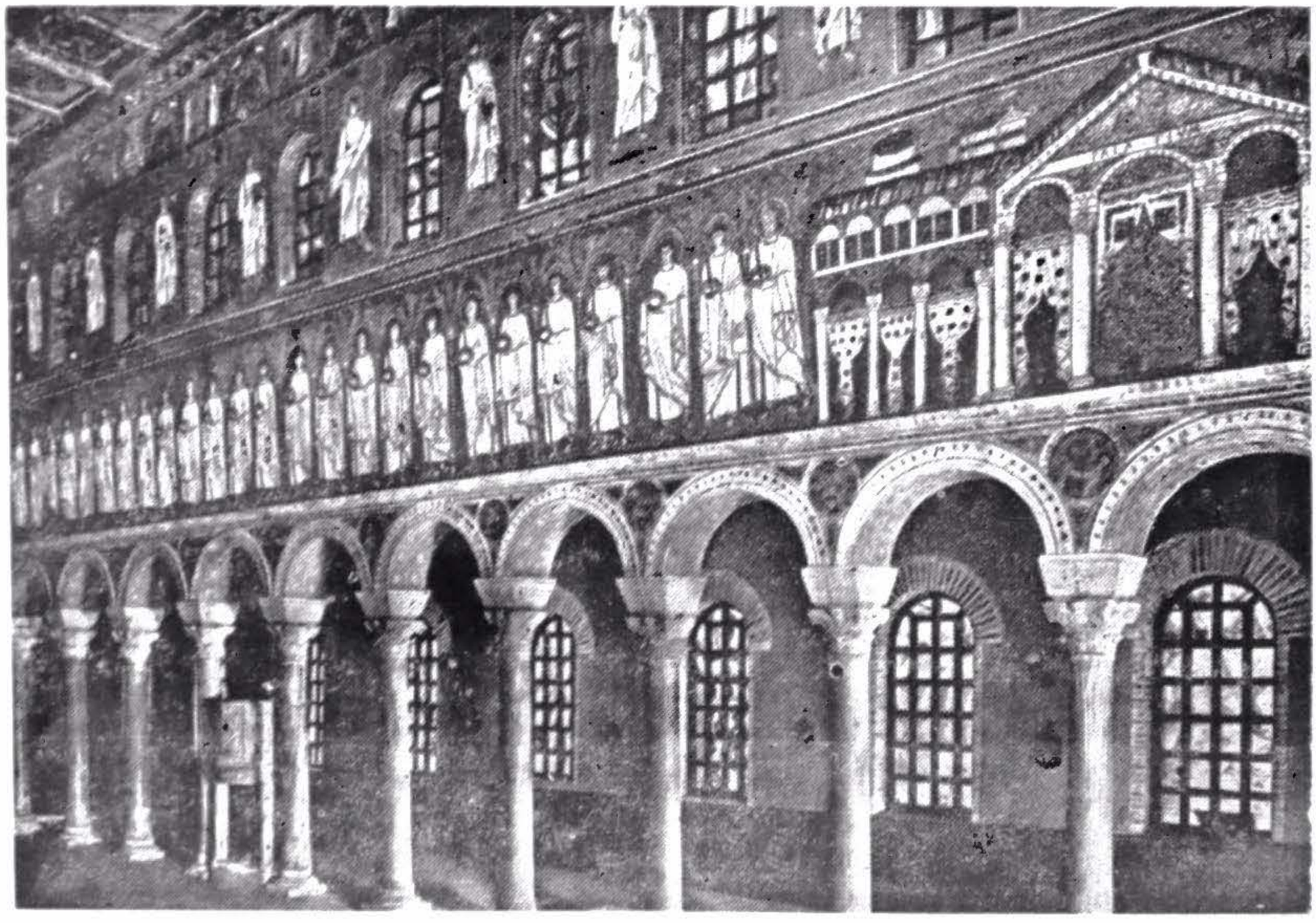


Interior of the Basilica of St. Demetrius in Thessalonica (5th century)

Apse of the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna

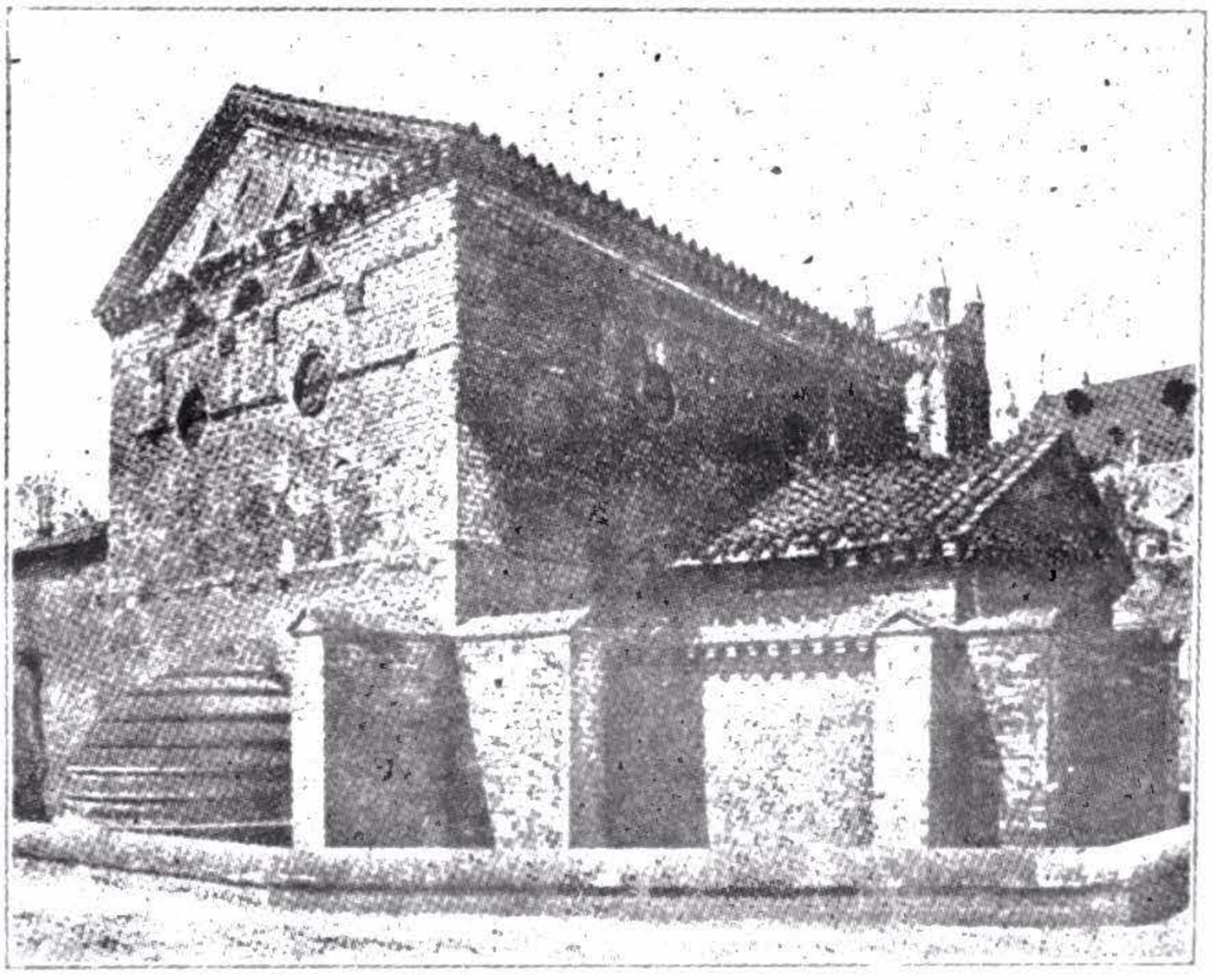


Mosaic from the Church of San Vitale, Ravenna
(showing Altar-table in use in the 6th century)

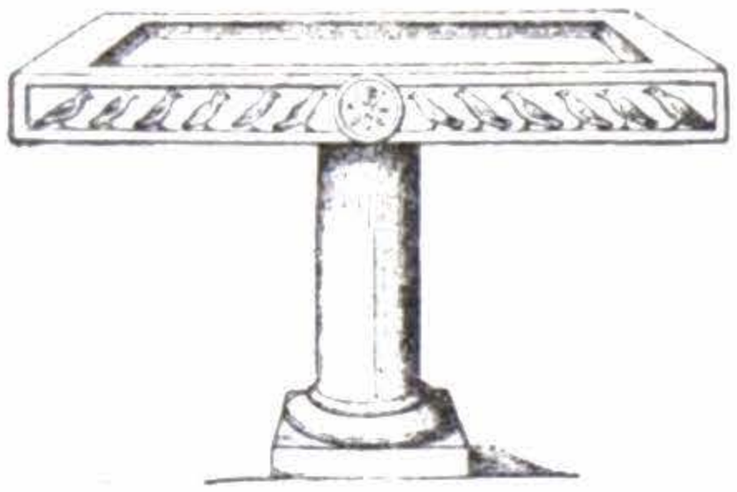


Right wall of the nave, showing procession of the martyrs, in
Saint Martin's Basilica in Ravenna (Sant' Apollinare Nuovo)

St. Apollinaris, first Bishop of Ravenna
with the priestly vestments in use in the 6th century:
alb (sticharion), chasuble (phelonion), cuffs, and the bishop's
pallium (omophorion)
(Mosaic from the apse, Sant' Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna)



The Baptistery in Poitiers
(the only surviving church building of Merovingian Gaul)



The earliest altar-table of Gaul still extant
(found at Auriol near Marseilles)

coverings, are in no way different from the altar-tables that may be seen in any Orthodox church today.

The saint to whom a basilica would be dedicated would be most often buried under the altar, sometimes in a special crypt; thus it was in the Basilica of St. Martin in Tours.

Baptisms were conducted in a separate building (baptistery) near the basilica. Several baptisteries from this period have been well preserved in Italy, and the baptistery in Poitiers is the only substantially intact church building of the whole Merovingian (pre-Charlemagne) period in Gaul.

The church furnishings of the basilica would be familiar to today's Orthodox Christian. There would be many oil-burning lamps, some in chandeliers hanging from the roof, others before the tombs of saints or before icons or relics. The poet Fortunatus and his fellow student Felix were healed of an eye affliction by rubbing the affected spot with oil from the lamp burning before the icon of St. Martin in his church in Ravenna. A remarkable miracle in the Life of St. Gregory of Tours (ch. 22) occurred with the oil lamp which hung before the relic of the Holy Cross in St. Radegund's convent in Poitiers. Beeswax candles were used, both as offerings and carried in processions.

The vestments of the clergy were also very similar to those still in use today in the Orthodox Church. The characteristic vestment of deacons (who at this time were still a separate order of the clergy, as in the East today, and not simply a stage on the way to the priesthood, as they became in the Latin church), was the alb, a long white tunic of silk or wool, identical with the Eastern stichar-ion; later in the West this was much modified. Deacons also wore a stole or orarium over the left shoulder — the orarion of Orthodox deacons today. Priests wore the chasuble, which in distinction from the Eastern phelonion had a hood (cucullus), as mentioned in the *Life of the Fathers* (VIII, 5), and also wore cuffs, as in the East today. The distinctive mark of the bishop was the pallium (given only to some bishops in the beginning), which in later centuries became much simplified in the Latin church, but in this period, according to Prof. Dalton, "in form corresponded almost exactly with the omophorion of the Greek Church" (vol. 1, p. 334). These vestments were chiefly adapted for use from the ceremonial dress of the Roman imperial court; as in the case of

the Christian basilica, the Church used for its external forms what it found when it emerged from the catacombs and hallowed it for use by succeeding generations.

The daily cycle of services followed the same pattern which has been preserved up to now in the Orthodox Church: Vespers and Matins, the Hours (First, Third, Sixth and Ninth), Compline and Nocturn. The specific content of the services (for example, which psalms were read in which services) was different from that of the East, but the general nature of the material used (psalms, antiphons taken from the psalms, readings from the Old and New Testaments, newly-composed hymns) was the same. Nocturn and Matins were combined to form the Vigil (vigilia) before the great feasts. The services in monasteries were generally longer than those in parish churches and cathedrals.

The Gallican Rite, which differed from the Roman Rite in a number of details, was used in Gaul and Spain. Attempts have been made in modern times to reconstruct this rite, which was supplanted in Gaul by the Roman Rite in the 8th and 9th centuries, and later died out completely in the West; but the texts from this period that have come down to us give only the general outline of some of the services, and not their full texts. The Gallican Mass (missa, as the Liturgy was universally called in the West) has some interesting points of agreement with the Easern Liturgy as opposed to the Roman Mass, most notably the presence of a "Great Entrance" with the unconsecrated bread and wine after the dismissal of the catechumens. However, even the Latin Mass at this time was less different from the Eastern Liturgy than it became in later centuries, and no problems were encountered on the frequent occasions when Christian clergy from the West would concelebrate the Liturgy in Constantinople, or Eastern clergy would do so in Rome.

The liturgical year was basically the same as that known today in East and West alike. Great feasts such as Christmas and Epiphany, Pascha, the Ascension and Pentecost were celebrated with special solemnity, as were saints' days such as those of St. John the Baptist and Sts. Peter and Paul. The Calendar of saints in the Roman Church included many thousands of names, and the memory of local saints was kept with great reverence; in Tours, as St. Gregory informs us, special vigils were kept for the feasts of Sts. Martin, Litorius and Bricius of Tours, St. Symphorian of Autun, and St. Hilary of Poitiers (*HF* X, 31). Wherever there were relics of saints, they were venerated with special solemnity; the relics of St. Martin in Tours, in particular, were the object of pilgrimages from all over Gaul. The fast of Great Lent was kept strictly, and Wednesdays and Fridays of most weeks were fast days, in addition to extra fast days before Christmas and at other times.

ST. GREGORY OF TOURS

The days of rogation mentioned by St. Gregory were special days of fasting and prayer before the feast of the Ascension; these were instituted by St. Mamertus of Vienne in the 5th century and later spread to the whole of Gaul and the West (*HF* II, 347).

ICONOGRAPHY

FROM THE BEGINNING, the Christian basilicas were adorned with mosaics or frescoes, at first in the apse, and very soon on the walls as well. Those in Gaul were lost together with the churches that housed them, and so we can only judge of them by contemporary descriptions and by surviving examples, especially in Italy, which was in close contact with Gaul at this time.

The iconography of the 4th century is rather close in style to the realism of later Roman painting, although by the end of the century, even in Rome, it is already changing towards the Byzantine style; in content it combines themes from the symbolic paintings of the catacombs (Christ as the Lamb, the Good Shepherd, etc.) with scenes from the Old and (more and more with time) from the New Testament. The Basilica of St. Ambrose in Milan, dedicated in 386, contained frescoes (as we know from the inscriptions of the Saint himself) from the Old Testament, and the following ones from the New Testament: the Annunciation, the conversion of Zacchaeus, the woman with an issue of blood, the Transfiguration, and St. John leaning on the breast of the Saviour. Judging from the contemporary mosiacs at St. Pudentiana in Rome, the style of these icons was already very close to the later Byzantine style. In the Basilica of St. Paulinus in Nola (404), the two sides of the nave contained scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and in the space between the windows above were apostles and saints, with Christ the King in the apse. There was as yet no fixed rule for the depiction of various feasts or scriptural events, and there was no formal canonization of the saints who might be portrayed in icons; apostles, martyrs, and even recent bishops and ascetics were depicted according to their local veneration. There is even a case where, in the baptistery of the monastery of Sulpicius Severus at Primuliacum in southern Gaul, the recently-reposed St. Martin is depicted on one wall, and the still-living Bishop Paulinus of Nola on the opposite wall — something which aroused the good-natured protest of St. Paulinus, who wrote Severus: "By depicting me alone on the opposite wall, you have contrasted my lowly figure, shrouded in mental darkness, with Martin's holy person" (St. Paulinus, Letter 32).

The distinctive Byzantine style is already evident in the 5th century, and the 6th century is the age of an already developed and perfected art. The

great basilicas of Ravenna are monumental triumphs of Byzantine iconography — an art which in style and subject-matter has not changed essentially through the ages, and is still very much alive today. The Byzantine style was universal in the Roman Empire, as may be seen in the icons even of the remote border area of Mt. Sinai, where the mosaic of the Transfiguration in the apse is identical with later icons of the feast down to our day. This is the Christian art that was known to the great Western hierarchs of the 6th century, St. Gregory, Pope of Rome, and St. Gregory of Tours.

In Gaul, mosaic icons are known (*HF* II, 16; X, 45), but more commonly we hear of frescoes. The original basilica of St. Martin had frescoes which were restored by St. Gregory, as he himself relates (*HF* X, 31): "I found the walls of St. Martin's basilica damaged by fire. I ordered my workmen to use all their skill to paint and decorate them, until they were as bright as they had previously been." These frescoes must have been impressive, for when treating of the stay of a certain Eberulf in the basilica (under the law of sanctuary which then prevailed), St. Gregory writes: "When the priest had gone off, Eberulf's young women and his men-servants used to come in and stand gaping at the frescoes on the walls" (*HF* VII, 22). St. Gregory has preserved for us also a brief account of how the frescoes were painted (5th century): "The wife of Namatius built the church of St. Stephen in the suburb outside the walls of Clermont-Ferrand. She wanted it to be decorated with colored frescoes. She used to hold in her lap a book from which she would read stories of events which happened long ago, and tell the workmen what she wanted painted on the walls" (*HF* II, 17). This "book" might have been the Scriptures, the Life of a saint, or even, as Prof. Dalton suggests, "some sort of painter's manual like those used in the East" (vol. 1, p. 327).

When restoring the main basilica of Tours (distinct from the basilica where St. Martin's relics reposed), as Abbot Odo informs us precisely in his life of St. Gregory (ch. 12), the latter "decorated the walls with histories having for subject the exploits of Martin." It so happens that we have a list of these iconographic scenes in a poem of Fortunatus describing the basilica (*Carmine* X, 6). They are: (1) St. Martin curing a leper by a kiss; (2) dividing his cloak and giving half to a beggar; (3) giving away his tunic; (4) raising three men from the dead; (5) preventing the pine tree from falling on him by the sign of the Cross; (6) idols being crushed by a great column launched from heaven; (7) St Martin exposing a pretended martyr. We can only regret the disappearance of such a notable monument of Orthodox Christian art, just one of many in 6th-century Gaul, the likes of which were not to be seen in later

6th-Century Iconography

THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS
6th-century Mosaic
in St. Martin's basilica
(Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna)

SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS
Probably the earliest
surviving icon of the Saint
(Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna)

Mosaic of Christ from the Basilica
of St. Pudentiana, Rome, about 385

6th-century Mosaic of Christ, from Sant. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna

The Transfiguration of Christ (6th-century mosaic at Mt. Sinai)

Saint Martin before the Saviour
(Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna)

centuries in the West (where the Roman-Byzantine style was gradually lost); but we may gain a general idea of its appearance in the contemporary basilicas of Ravenna with their mosaic icons. One of these basilicas, indeed, was dedicated originally to St. Martin of Tours, the dedication later being changed to Sant' Apollinare Nuovo.

Separate panel icons also existed at this time. In the history of Bede it is stated that St. Augustine of Canterbury and those with him, after landing in Britain in the year 597, came to King Ethelbert of Kent "bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board" (*Ecclesiastical History of England,* Book I, ch. 25). In the *Life of the Fathers* (XII, 2) we read of "the icons (Latin *iconicas)* of the apostles and other saints" in the oratory where St. Bracchio prayed. It should be noted that the oratories and small village churches of Gaul would not, of course, be in basilica style or usually made of stone; they were generally of wood, and the icons in them were painted on boards and hung on the walls. The most detailed reference to these 6th-century panel icons is in St. Gregory's *Glory of the Martyrs* (ch. 22), where we read, in the account "of the Jew who stole an icon (Latin *iconica,* or in one manuscript, *icona)* and pierced it," the following, which is also an impressive testimony of the truly Orthodox attitude of the Church of Gaul at this time, as contrasted with the iconoclast sentiment which seized part of Gaul (as it did also of the Christian East) in the century of Charlemagne. Here are St. Gregory's words: "The faith which has remained pure among us up to this day causes us to love Christ with such a love that the faithful who keep His law engraved in their hearts wish to have also His painted image, in memory of His virtue, on visible boards which they hang in their churches and in their homes. . . A Jew, who often saw in a church an image of this sort painted on a board (Latin *imaginem in tabula pictam)* attached to the wall, said to himself, 'Behold the seducer who has humiliated us'. . . Having come then in the night, he pierced the image, took it down from the wall, and carried it under his clothes to his house in order to throw it into the fire." He was discovered when it was found that the image shed copious blood in the place where it had been pierced (a miracle which occurred also later in Byzantium with the Icon of the Iviron Mother of God, and in Soviet times in Kaplunovka in Russia with a crucifix).

A number of such panel icons on wood have come down to us from 6th-century Mount Sinai; they are identical in appearance to the icons which pious Orthodox Christians cause to have painted for their churches and homes even today.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

THE CHURCH GOVERNMENT of Gaul in the 6th century was, in the words of Prof. Dalton, according to the "Eastern system" (vol. 1, p. 272) — that is, according to Orthodox and not Papal principles.

At this time there were about 130 bishops in Gaul, of whom eleven were Metropolitans, or bishops of the chief cities of the land, with certain rights of precedence over the other bishops of the metropolitan district. The Metropolitans of Arles (in the south) usually held a seniority over the other Metropolitans, and especially during the episcopate of St. Caesarius of Arles (first half of the 6th century), it was he who convoked and presided over councils of bishops. There were no vicar bishops; each bishop governed his own see, and questions affecting many bishops were decided in councils, where all the bishops had an equal voice.

The Pope of Rome, while of course respected as Patriarch of the West, was still "first among equals" and exercised authority about equal to that exercised in later centuries (before the fall of Byzantium) by the Patriarch of Constantinople over the Church of Russia. Pope Gregory the Great at this time specifically protested against the assumption by the Patriarch of Constantinople (or any Patriarch, including himself) of the title "Ecumenical Patriarch": "What will you say to Christ, Who is the Head of the universal Church, in the scrutiny of the last judgment, having attempted to put all His members under yourself by the appellation of Universal,. . . Certainly Peter, the first of the Apostles, himself a member of the universal Church, Paul, Andrew, John, — what were they but heads of particular communities. . . And of all the saints, not one has asked himself to be called universal. . . The prelates of this Apostolic See, which by the Providence of God I serve, had the honor offered them of being called universal. . . But yet not one of them has ever wished to be called by such a title, or seized upon this ill-advised name, lest if, in virtue of the rank of the pontificate he should take to himself the glory of singularity, he might seem to have denied it to all his brethren." (*Letters of St. Gregory the Great*, Book V, 18.)

The very title of "apostolic see," although applied with special reverence to the See of St. Peter, was in this period given not only to Rome but to all episcopal sees, at least in Gaul, as may be seen in the letter of St. Radegund preserved in the *History of the Franks* (IX, 42): "To the holy fathers in Christ and to the lord Bishops, worthy occupants of their apostolic sees. . ." The "apostolic see" of Bordeaux is mentioned specifically by St. Gregory in the *History of the Franks*.

Even the famous case of St. Hilary of Arles, which is sometimes viewed as an example of "Papal intervention" in the affairs of the Church of Gaul, in the eyes of Pope St. Leo himself had entirely another meaning. The Pope — who, indeed, was recognized as having jurisdiction when appealed to by other bishops in the West — overturned St. Hilary's deposition in 444 of a certain bishop in Gaul, whom St. Leo found innocent of the charge against him, not in the name of any "Papal rights" but rather with the intention of restoring the ancient rights of the local bishops of Gaul. He accused St. Hilary of "claiming for himself the ordinations of all the churches throughout the provinces of Gaul, and transferring to himself the dignity which is due to Metropolitans," thus "claiming for himself the ordinations of a province for which he was not responsible." St. Leo concludes his letter to the bishops of the Gallic province of Vienne: "We are not keeping in our own hands the ordinations of your provinces, but we are claiming for you that no further innovations should be allowed, and that for the future no opportunity should be given for the usurper to infringe your privileges." (*Letters of St. Leo the Great,* Letter X.)

It was only in later centuries that Papal "universality" began to be asserted by the Popes, and only after the Schism that the present-day concept of "Papalism" was developed. In the 5th and 6th centuries the government of the Church of Gaul was very much in the "Eastern" way. The Metropolitans had no direct jurisdiction even over the bishops of their own province. When Felix, Bishop of Nantes, made false accusations against St. Gregory of Tours, his own Metropolitan, out of spite for being unable to take away some church property from the latter's diocese, St. Gregory could do nothing but express his exasperation at such un-Christian conduct in a reply not lacking in St. Gregory's dry humor: "What a pity that it was not Marseilles that elected you its bishop! Instead of bringing you cargoes of oil and other wares, its ships could have carried only papyrus, which would have given you more opportunity for writing libellous letters to honest folk like me" (*HF* V, 5).

CONCLUSION: THE MEANING OF SIXTH-CENTURY GAUL FOR TODAY

TO SUM UP this brief description of 6th-century Christian Gaul, we may say that here we find already the historical Orthodox world which is familiar even today to any Orthodox Christian who is at home in true (not modernized or renovated) Orthodoxy. The scholar of Late Latin could find ample opportunities for further research in this field, whether in the works of St. Gregory of Tours or in numerous other texts of this time (which have been surprisingly

little studied or translated up to now); the material given above is no more than an introduction. In modern times, 6th-century Gaul may most accurately be likened to 19th-century Russia. Both societies were entirely permeated with Orthodox Christianity; in them the Orthodox *standard* was always the governing principle of life (however short of it the practice might fall), and the central fact in the life of the people was reverence for Christ, the holy things of the Church, and sanctity. In the 6th century (as opposed to the 4th, which is still a time of development), the outward things of the Church had already received their more-or-less final forms, which subsequently changed very little in the Orthodox East; thus, we are able to feel very much at home with them. At the same time, there is a freshness and newness about the Church's forms and its life which is very inspiring to us today, when it is very easy either to take the age-old forms of Orthodoxy for granted, or to feel that they have no "relevance" to modern life.

So much for the outward side of Orthodoxy; but what of its inward side? Does the Christian world of St. Gregory of Tours have any spiritual significance for us today, or is it of no more than antiquarian interest for us, the "out-of-date" Orthodox Christians of the 20th century?

Much has been written in modern times of the "fossilized" Orthodox Church and its followers who, when they are true to themselves and their priceless heritage, simply do not "fit in" with anyone else in the contemporary world, whether heterodox Christians, pagans, or unbelievers. If only we could undersand it, there is a message in this for us, concerning our position among others in the world and our preservation of the Orthodox Faith.

Perhaps no one has better expressed the modern world's bewilderment over genuine Orthodox Christianity than a renowned scholar precisely of St. Gregory of Tours and the Gaul of his times. In his book, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London, 1926), Sir Samuel Dill has written: "The dim religious life of the early Middle Ages is severed from the modern mind by so wide a gulf, by such a revolution of beliefs that the most cultivated sympathy can only hope to revive it in faint imagination. Its hard, firm, realistic faith in the wonders and terrors of an unseen world seems to evade the utmost effort to make it real to us" (p. 324). "Gregory's legends reveal a world of imagination and fervent belief which no modern man can ever fully enter into, even with the most insinuating power of imaginative sympathy. It is intensely interesting, even fascinating. But the interest is that of the remote observer, studying with cold scrutiny a puzzling phase in the development of the human

spirit. Between us and the early Middle Ages there is a gulf which the most supple and agile imagination can hardly hope to pass. He who has pondered most deeply over the popular faith of that time will feel most deeply how impossible it is to pierce its secret" (p. 397).

And yet, for us who strive to be conscious Orthodox Christians in the 20th century it is precisely the *spiritual* world of St. Gregory of Tours that is of profound relevance and significance. The material side is familiar to us, but that is only an expression of something much deeper. It is surely providential for us that the material side of the Orthodox culture of Gaul has been almost entirely destroyed, and we cannot view it directly even in a museum of dead antiquities; for that leaves the spiritual message of his epoch even freer to speak to us. The Orthodox Christian of today is overwhelmed to open St. Gregory's "Books of Miracles" and find there just what his soul is craving in this soulless, mechanistic modern world; he finds that very Christian path of salvation which he knows in the Orthodox services, the Lives of the Saints, the Patristic writings, but which is so absent today, even among the best of modern "Christians," that one begins to wonder whether one is not really insane, or some literal fossil of history, for continuing to believe and feel as the Church has always believed and felt. It is one thing to recognize the intellectual truth of Orthodox Christianity; but how is one to live it when it is so out of harmony with the times? And then one reads St. Gregory and finds that all of this Orthodox truth is also profoundly *normal*, that whole societies were once based on it, that it is unbelief and "renovated" Christianity which are profoundly abnormal and not Orthodox Christianity, that this is the heritage and birthright *of the West itself* which it deserted so long ago when it separated from the one and only Church of Christ, thereby losing the key to the "secret" which so baffles the modern scholar — the "secret" of true Christianity, which must be approached with a fervent, believing heart, and not with the cold aloofness of modern unbelief which is not natural to man but is an anomaly of history.

But let us just briefly state why the Orthodox Christian feels so much at home in the spiritual world of St. Gregory of Tours.

St. Gregory is an historian; but this does not mean a mere chronicler of bare facts, or the mythical "objective observer" of so much modern scholarship who looks at things with the "cold scrutiny" of the "remote observer." He had a point of view; he was always seeking a pattern in history; he had constantly before him what the modern scientist would call a "model" into which he fitted the historical facts which he collected. In actual fact, all scientists and scholars act in this way, and any one who denies it only deceives himself and admits in

effect that his "model" of reality, his basis for interpreting facts, is unconscious, and therefore is much more capable of distorting reality than is the "model" of a scholar who knows what his own basic beliefs and presuppositions are. The "objective observer," most often in our times, is someone whose basic view of reality is modern unbelief and scepticism, who is willing to ascribe the lowest possible motives to historical personages, who is inclined to dismiss all "supernatural" events as belonging to the convenient categories of "superstition" or "self-deception" or as to be understood within the concepts of modern psychology.

The "model" by which St. Gregory interprets reality is Orthodox Christianity, and he not only subscribes to it with his mind, but is fervently committed to it with his whole heart. Thus, he begins his great historical work, *The History of the Franks,* with nothing less than his own confession of faith: "Proposing as I do to describe the wars waged by kings against hostile peoples, by martyrs against the heathen and by the Churches against the heretics, I wish first of all to explain my own faith, so that whoever reads me may not doubt that I am a Catholic." ("Catholic," of course, in 6th-century texts, means the same thing that we now mean by the word "Orthodox.") There follows the Nicene Creed, paraphrased and with certain Orthodox interpretations added.

Thus in St. Gregory we may see the *wholeness* of view which has been lost by almost all of modern scholarship — another one of those basic differences between East and West that began only with the Schism of Rome. In this, St. Gregory is fully in the Orthodox spirit. In this approach there is a great advantage solely from the point of view of historical fact — for we have before us not only the "bare facts" he chronicles, but we understand as well the context in which he interprets them. But more important than this — particularly when it comes to chronicling supernatural events or the virtues of saints — we have the inestimable advantage of *a trained observer on the spot,* so to speak — someone who interprets spiritual events (almost all of which he knew either from personal experience or from the testimony of witnesses he regarded as reliable) on the basis of the Church's tradition and his own rich Christian experience. We do not need to guess as to the meaning of some spiritually-significant event when we have such a reliable contemporary interpreter of it, and especially when his interpretations are so much in accord with what we find in the basic source books of the Orthodox East. We may place all the more trust in St. Gregory's interpretations when we know that he himself was granted spiritual visions (as described in his life) and was frank in admitting when he did not see the spiritual visions of others (*HF* V, 50).

Sir Samuel Dill notes that access is denied him, as a modern man, to the world of St. Gregory's "legends." What are we, 20th-century Orthodox Christians to think of these "legends"? Prof. Dalton notes, regarding the very book of St. Gregory which we are presenting here, that "his *Lives of the Fathers* have something of the childlike simplicity characterizing the *Dialogues* of St. *Gregory the Great*" (vol. 1, p. 21). We have already discussed, in the "Prologue" to this book, the value of this "childlikeness" for Orthodox Christians today, as well as the high standards of truthfulness of such Orthodox writers as St. Gregory the Great (as contrasted with the frequent fables of the medieval West). The extraordinary spiritual manifestations described by St. Gregory of Tours are familiar to any Orthodox Christian who is well grounded in the ABC's of spiritual experience and in the basic Orthodox source-books; they sound like "legends" only to those whose grounding is in the materialism and unbelief of modern times. Somewhat ironically, these "legends" have now become a little more accessible to a new generation that has become interested in psychic and occult phenomena as well as actual sorcery and witchcraft; but for them also the whole tone of St. Gregory's writings will remain foreign unless they obtain the key to its "secrets": true Orthodox Christianity. St. Gregory's "wonders and terrors of an unseen world" open up for us another reality entirely from that of modern unbelief and occultism alike: the reality of spiritual life, which is indeed more unseen than seen, which does indeed account for many extraordinary phenomena usually misunderstood by modern scholarship, and which begins now and continues into eternity.

There is, finally, another aspect of St. Gregory's writings which modern historians find generally not so much baffling as disdainfully amusing, but to which, again, we Orthodox Christians have the key which they lack. This aspect is that of the "coincidences," omens, and the like, which St. Gregory finds significant but which modern historians find totally irrelevant to the chronicling of historical events. Some of these phenomena are manifestations of spiritual vision, such as the naked sword which St. Salvius (and no one else) saw hanging over the house of King Chilperic, portending the death of the king's sons (*HF* V, 50). But other of the manifestations are simply dreams or natural phenomena of an extraordinary kind, which either fill St. Gregory with foreboding (*HF* VIII, 17) or of which he says in all simplicity, "I have no idea what all this meant" (*HF* V, 23). The modern historian is only amused at the idea of finding a "meaning" behind earthquakes or strange signs in the sky; but St. Gregory, as a Christian historian, is aware that God's Providence is at work everywhere in the universe and can be understood even in small or seemingly

random details by those who are spiritually sensitive; he sees also that the deepest causes of historical events are by no means always the obvious ones. Concerning this theological point we may cite the words of a contemporary of St. Gregory in the East, St. Abba Dorotheus, to whom the writings of St. Gregory would have been not in the least strange. "It is good, brethren, to place your hope for every deed upon God and to say: Nothing happens without the will of God; but of course God knew that this was good and useful and profitable, and therefore he did this, even though this matter also had some outward cause. For example, I could say that inasmuch as I ate food with the pilgrims and forced myself a litle in order to be host to them, therefore my stomach was weighed down and there was a numbness caused in my feet and from this I became ill. I could also cite various other causes (for one who seeks them, there is no lack of them); but the most sure and profitable thing is to say: In truth God knew that this would be more profitable for my soul, and therefore it happened in this way." (St. Abba Dorotheus, *Spiritual Instructions,* Instruction 12.)

St. Gregory, like St. Abba Dorotheus, was always seeking first of all the *primary* or inward causes of events, which concern the will of God and man's salvation. That is why his history of the Franks, as well as of individual saints, are of much greater value than the "objective" (that is, purely *outward*) researches of modern scholars into the same subjects. This is not to say that some of his historical facts might not be subject to correction, but only that his *spiritual* interpretation of events is basically the correct, the Christian one.

It remains now, before proceeding to the texts of St. Gregory himself, to examine only one more major aspect of the historical context of *The Life of the Fathers:* the monasticism of 6th-century Gaul. Here again we shall find St. Gregory's Gaul very "Eastern," and perhaps here more than in any other aspect of that early Orthodox age will we find cause for spiritual inspiration, and perhaps even some hints that will help our own poor and feeble Orthodox monasticism in the 20th century.

(To be continued)

ARCHBISHOP PACHOMIUS OF CHERNIGOV

(*Continued from page 13.*)

The brother-bishops had another brother, Michael, who between the two wars was a theology teacher in Poland at the Kremenetz and Vilna Seminaries. After the Second World War he became a monk and was consecrated bishop of Vraclaw, where he soon died.

The brother-bishops, Pachomius and Abercius, as their document clearly reveals, belong to the ranks of the confessors of the true Orthodox Church of Russia in the 20th century. Their epistle, while moderate in tone and even discouraging an immediate break in communion with Metropolitan Sergius (a break which they found it later necessary to make), is so precise in its diagnosis of the mistakes of the new church policy of Metropolitan Sergius that it seems contemporary with our own day, fifty years later, when the results of these mistakes are glaringly evident to everyone. Above all, as with all the founding fathers of the Catacomb Church in Russia, the emphasis of the Epistle is on the *spiritual freedom* without which the Church can become merely another instrument of worldly powers.

The Epistle is not found in the usual printed and manuscript sources of this period, but was preserved by E. N. Lopeshanskaya, the secretary of Archbishop Pachomius' vicar, Bishop Damascene of Glukhov, another ardent opponent of the Declaration. She devoted her whole life to the preservation of Bishop Damascene's works and significance, and shortly before her death in San Francisco in 1972 was able to print this Epistle together with other materials on the "Bishop-Confessors" who opposed Metropolitan Sergius.

Sources: Archbishop Nikon's Biography of Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, vol. I, p. 188, vol. IV, p. 201. I. M. Andreyev, *History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days,* Jordanville, 1950. Archpriest M. Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs,* vol. II, pp. 91-92, vol. III in manuscript. Archpriest M. Polsky, *The Canonical Situation of the Russian Orthodox Church,* Jordanville, 1948. E. M. Lopeshanskaya, *Bishop-Confessors,* San Francisco, 1971, pp. 10-25. Archbishop Leonty of Chile, Memoirs (manuscript). Irene Mashin, unpublished memoirs on Archbishop Abercius.

The Epistle of the Brother Bishops

ARCHBISHOP PACHOMIUS OF CHERNIGOV
AND ARCHBISHOP ABERCIUS OF ZHITOMIR

Document of Late 1927

IT WOULD SEEM that up until this time we have not been able to come to terms with the government, and we do not enjoy the rights which are supposedly provided by the laws of the Soviet Republic to every religion; and this is not at all because our Church is counter-revolutionary. Our archpastors and church laymen, who are languishing in the bonds of banishment and bitter labors, have not at all occupied themselves with any kind of anti-government activity. This is now evident to everyone. The true reason for the grievous manifestations is to be found in the fundamental divergence of our basic religious views on God's world and human life, on the aims and purposes of our earthly existence, with the Communist views which are placed by the Soviet government as the foundation of the life of its citizens: that which for us is holy and an indisputable truth, for the atheists is opium, superstition, deception, charlatanry, and perhaps even counter-revolution — for example, the idea of the Patriarchate, holy icons, holy relics, our holy Mysteries, and our Divine services, and the very faith in Christ crucified. Thus, there is again confirmed for the whole world the eternal truth of the words of the great Apostle Paul, *The word of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but for us who are being saved it is the power of God. We preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews a stumbling-block, unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God* (I Cor. 1:18, 23-24). *We preach wisdom among them that are perfect: yet a wisdom not*

of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, hidden, which none of the rulers of this world have understood (I Cor. 2:6-8). Their minds have been blinded by the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4); *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged* (I Cor. 2:14).

Thus, there can be no union between Church and State, when it has to do with our Orthodox Church and the Soviet Union, by reason of the fundamental difference in the basic views of one and the other side. There is possible only a conditional agreement as to practical mutual relationships, solely on the foundation of the principle of the separation of Church and State.

In actual fact, can one even conceive the Soviet State in union with the Church? A State religion in an anti-religious State! A government Church in an atheist government! This is an absurdity; it contradicts the nature of the Church and the Soviet State; this is inacceptable both for a sincerely religious person and for an honest atheist.

However, they are trying to bring this absurdity into realization before our eyes. Our present leaders of church life, having a limited horizon, have begun to conduct a "new course of church policy." But this new path wanders off into the old paths and comes down to the attempt to organize a State Church as it was in the Russian Empire.

Already in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, which was published with a mocking and blasphemous preface in *Izvestia* on August 19, 1927, among other unfortunate assertions and expressions there was allowed something that testifies to the erasing by the authors of this most grievous document of the boundary between Church and State. How is it possible for a sincere person to declare without qualification that the joys and sorrows of the Soviet Union, as our native land, are the same for the Orthodox Church? The Soviet Union is a State, and such an identity of joys and sorrows the Holy Church cannot have with any government, and all the more with one that does not even conceal the fact that it would desire to liquidate every religion in general. Being drawn into church politics, our leaders have forgotten the exhortation of the holy Apostle, *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?* (II Cor. 6:14-15.)

If the majority of archpastors, pastors, and laymen, reading these and similar expressions in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, have not hast-

ened to protest, it is out of fear lest a premature announcement call forth a division in the Church, and as a result of a hope that, in their activity, Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod will correct the mistakes which they have allowed on paper. But, alas, reality has not justified our hopes. One must keep in mind that in general, when there is a union of the Church with a State having at its disposal outward power and all means of purely physical activity, then at the slightest violation of the ideally just mutual relations, the suffering side will always be the Church; even the freedom of its inward life is easily violated in view of the usual striving of the State to turn the Church administrative institutions into the organs of its own government. All the more, an anti-religious State which is unfriendly toward the Church, for which State certain of the unquestioned foundations of the inward life of the Church and its moral authority are superstitions, undeserving of any attention — such a State, of course, will not stand on ceremony. It will use the church apparatus (a servile Synod, accomodating leaders) for its political aims (which are not at all for the benefit of holy faith), and it will place the Church in a degrading position. The principle of the spiritual freedom of the Church and the non-interference of the Church in politics will immediately be violated by such a State — something we have already seen in actuality.

This is why Metropolitan Sergius, acting against the Soviet law concerning the "Separation of Church and State," has entered upon a very dangerous path.

And what is the result? Now it has already become clear that Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod have fallen under the frightful pressure of the agents of the government, even in their own ecclesiastical activity. Thus, the assignment and transfer of bishops is performed with the extremely close participation of the Soviet government; locally, the administrative and security organs watch to see whether the inhabitants accept the bishops who have been sent by the Synod of Metropolitan Sergius (the Orthodox bishops appear to their flocks under police protection), whether the name of Metropolitan Sergius is commemorated at the Divine services, and whether there is a prayer for the government (a government that considers prayer as charlatanry and ridicules it). Active church people who do not recognize Metropolitan Sergius are already being sent in banishment to Solovki, where the number of bishops grows every year; and even the question of the distribution and transfer of clergy is decided more by the Soviet government than by the church authority. The archpastoral sees, despite the decrees of the Sobor of 1917-18, are closed down in great numbers, which weakens the Church; and the bishops who are assigned, when

they come to their posts, are obliged first of all to report to the well-known government establishments regarding their intentions and plans for church work, and to receive from them guiding instructions. The civil authority now has no need to use its own means to remove disagreeable church people; it simply gives a (secret) order for this to the Synod or to the local bishop.

Metropolitan Sergius is a total slave, an obedient instrument in the hands of persons well-known to us, the representatives of separate Soviet institutions, and he has totally lost his moral-church authority, despite the word of the Apostle (II Tim. 2:15); because, behind every one even of his ecclesiastical orders, for us who are frightened and suspicious, there is to be seen an instigation from "those who are without." Besides this, our church administrative apparatus is placed in an impermissable nearness to the police organs in the Soviet government, something there has never been in the history of the Church and which cannot be tolerated. In a word, such a degradation and spitting upon, the holy Church has never yet endured.

But the holy Apostle Paul has handed down to us: *Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish* (Eph. 5:25-27), as the Bride of Christ. Do not, therefore, degrade the holy Church, do not dirty its immaculate garments.

The Church can be subjected to outward misfortunes, to persecutions and to difficult situations; but it cannot renounce its spiritual freedom and dignity. On the contrary, in misfortunes it shines yet more within, and is constantly renewed (II Cor. 4:16-17). Such is the law of spiritual life, both of the individual Christian and of the whole Church of Christ; and for this reason we understand bonds and sorrows as the mercy of God, for the Lord crowns His faithful slaves for them (II Cor. 4:17). But the Church will never agree to the degradation of the Holy Church, to the trampling upon its inward freedom. One cannot give over the freedom of the Church and its dignity to be trampled upon, *only that they may not be persecuted for the Cross of Christ* (Gal. 6:12), in the words of the Apostle.

The legalization which Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod are striving to conduct is totally unacceptable and impossible, because it contradicts the Soviet laws (is unlawful, illegal), is contrary to the nature of things, to the nature of the Church and the Soviet State, and is contrary to reason, for it strives to join what cannot be joined. Such a reform cannot be put into life

practically, and quite evidently it is collapsing. In regard to the Church, it is a criminal act, for it sells the freedom of the Church's inward life and blasphemously degrades her sanctity and dignity.

As a plan of the opponents of the Church of God and the Christian religion, the reform of Metropolitan Sergius is a logical measure, well thought-through (but not by him, of course), wih the aims of bringing disorder into the Holy Church and destroying the religious life of the country. But an Orthodox Metropolitan and a Patriarchal Synod cannot support such ends.

But even if in the new church policy of Metropolitan Sergius there were not anything criminal or reprehensible with regard to the Church, still it would be necessary to reject it for this reason alone, that without having bettered the outward condition of the Church, to which it pretended, it has evoked great disturbance and scandal in the church people and, in general, in the majority of believers, from hierarchs to laymen.

The heart of a good shepherd naturally is pained from unbearable grief at seeing this shocking picture of great church desolation, which has already been half-accomplished by the hand of a leader of the Church. We do not need such church reforms. Let us rather again and again go into bonds and banishment, but only preserve the souls of the people of God which has been entrusted to us; for we shall all give a great answer for the perdition of our children. *Woe unto the world because of occasions for stumbling; for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh* (Matt. 18:6-7, 10). The holy Apostle Paul teaches: If you personally have an actual spiritual freedom and a higher understanding, so that what is outward does not disturb you, and even if you are correct in your acts which are unusual for the majority, still, if these acts disturb the infirm conscience of a brother, beware lest your freedom serve as an occasion of stumbling for the infirm, and lest from your knowledge, your infirm brother should perish, for whom Christ died, and thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their infirm conscience, you sin against Christ (I Cor. 8:9-13).

So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another (Rom. 14:15-20). This the Apostle said with regard to food, but among us the question of general church life is considerably more important than the question of food and of our personal acts, and the occasion for stumbling in this area is much deeper. *Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks, or to the Church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many,*

that they may be saved (I Cor. 10:24, 32-33). This is the obligatory rule for all pastors of the Church — not to seek their own profit, but the profit of the many so that they might be saved.

The chief canonical foundation of the lawfulness of authority in the Russian Church, both of Metropolitan Peter and of Metropolitan Sergius (the latter while Metropolitan Peter is absent), is to be found in the fact that both the one and the other were called and supported in their temporary situation by the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church as a whole. Apart from this, in our question it is important to remember certain personal qualities of Metropolitan Sergius.

He is an irreproachable monk, a modest, reverent archpastor, a profound church thinker, author of a theological book of exalted patristic spirit, *The Orthodox Teaching on Salvation,* a good upbringer of future clergy in the theological academies, and a good and active churchman whom we all so revered and loved. True, in his practical activity Metropolitan Sergius, having a weak will, always had need to depend on the stronger wills of his friends. And when this support was taken away from him for any reason, he began often to waver and make mistakes from weakness of will. (Alas, in 1922 Metropolitan Sergius went even so far as to recognize the Higher Church Authority of the "Living Church." At the present time, Metropolitan Sergius not only has been deliberately deprived of his friends, but he has been surrounded by a pre-determined assortment of people, who have entered into his Synod not at his own choice. Under the influence of this new environment and of pressure from "those without," after several confinements in the Moscow "inner prison," Metropolitan Sergius accepted his new "course" of church policy, which after a prolonged resistance he finally recognized as "correct" and obligatory for the Christian, and as answering to the needs of the Church.

It is not to be doubted, moreover, that in this undertaking of his, Metropolitan Sergius did not have any evil aims himself with regard to the Holy Church. Of course, he hoped to achieve peace in church life and the release of prisoners. In a word, a trusting man hoped to arrange the outward prosperity of the Church (after he had fulfilled the demands made of him and after the promises given to him would be fulfilled), and he expected from this also the inward good order of religious life.

The very principle of Metropolitan Sergius' aim — the bringing of the outward forms of church life into agreement with contemporary socio-political conditions, as a true legalization — is in essence correct, and, we repeat, it is according to the Apostolic teaching in spirit. But our weak-willed, though not

badly-intentioned, leader, being subjected to insistent outward influence, did not hold firm within the ecclesiastical boundaries of this principle, having over-evaluated the significance of outward conditions for religious life, and chose as means for his correct aim not the confession of church truth, but rather personal cunning, lack of sincerity, and politics. Having raised such a weapon, unsuitable for use in church activity, Metropolitan Sergius has himself suffered from it, for the sons of this age are always more skilled than the sons of light in the use of this weapon.

But Metropolitan Sergius trusted in his own wisdom, in worldly means, instead of entirely hoping in the mercy and help of God, in the power of the Truth of Christ, having armed himself with the struggles of purity and confession and constant preparedness to endure sorrows and persecutions, by which struggles of the faithful the Church of God is adorned and eternally renewed, and not by the joys of life, as the Renovationists preach. But worldly means of battle, being unsuitable for an active religious Christian, the Apostle Paul totally renounces and condemns. He chastizes even the shadow of hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14) and commands all Christians to renounce lying and to *speak the truth each one with his neighbor* (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3-9).

Metropolitan Sergius, establishing a mutual relationship between the Church and the Soviet State, has deviated in practice from the fundamental and correct idea which determines these relations; and having chosen worldly methods of activity, he has violated the tradition of the Orthodox Church regarding church politics; at the same time, he does not stand firm even on the basis of Soviet law. And on such a false foundation, what good thing can be built? But Metropolitan Sergius did not allow a stepping away in principle from the Truth, the Faith, and church teaching, and he has not violated the canonical order of the Church. In any case his sin is not of a dogmatic or a canonical character, but one of weakness in practice and of practical mistakes, of an incorrect direction of church policy and administrative activities. But since his policy has turned out in its result to be harmful and degrading for the Church of God, it must be changed, corrected, or else the unsuccessful administrator must be removed, perhaps a penance must be placed upon him, but he should not be excommunicated from the Church as an apostate, and there should not be a break of canonical communion with him as with a heretic or schismatic before the judgment of a Council.

Although at the present time there is no possibility of assembling a full Council of bishops for the consideration of general questions (including the question of public policy and the relation of the Church to the State), still

considering the mistakes and the unacceptable activities of the leader, the bishops can raise their voice, for these mistakes have already been sufficiently made clear. The bishops are even obliged to step forth, and can even demand from the leader that he correct his mistakes and abandon the false path of worldly cunning in church matters.

To declare a premature break with the leader, or to refuse to participate in church government, to go into retirement — this would mean to leave one's flock during the misfortunes of the Holy Church, to go off to the side, giving place for the enemy, just so that one's own clean garments might not be soiled in the midst of the general confusion, and so that one might console oneself with the thought that we are not participating in the sin of the leader. But by this we commit the sin of insensitivity in the sorrows and sufferings of the Holy Church, while the responsibility for church life is not taken away from us. In the church misfortunes of antiquity, a hermit of many years would leave the desert so as to serve for the pacification of the suffering Church. The holy Apostle Paul shows in himself a flaming desire to be united through death with Christ in the heavenly mansions, so as to live in the sorrowful flesh for the benefit of his flock (Phil. 1:21-26).

We have occasion to meet — whether before their bonds or after, and many times in bonds — with very many archpastors who have endured the contemporary trials or have sat out their terms, and we have conversed with them personally or are in correspondence with them, and with full assurance we can declare that they will never give their approval to the work of Metropolitan Sergius as it is now proceeding. On the contrary, all with one accord say, with almost identical words, that they grieve and are greatly disturbed, even though they do not find it possible to break communion with Metropolitan Sergius.

But why do they not give their voices? Why do they not manifest their protest? Because they are isolated, and, as a result of this they are insufficiently informed, and they are not able to decide to express themselves in a final way without sufficient facts, all the more in that they know what significance will be given to their response. The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius is known to prisoners only from the press, and it causes disturbance, grief, fear for the life of the Holy Church. But how its reform is being carried out in fact — how can the prisoners and exiles in the Siberian tundra or the Ziryani swamps know about this?

But if the temporary substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens will stubbornly continue in his scheme, and will not free his post, we will depart from him as a whole Church, for the episcopate has the right and the foundation to de-

prive him of the authority in which it clothed him for building up and not destroying (II Cor. 10:8) the life of the Church. A man without will and not firm cannot guide church life in our times. Metropolitan Sergius has not been able to fulfill the command of the Apostle, *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time* (Col. *4:5)*. With those that are without he has been "unequally yoked" (II Cor. 6:14), and he must correct his mistake. But if he is not strong enough to do this himself, let him leave it to others, freeing his place as leader of the Russian Orthodox Church. But if Metropolitan Sergius disobeys the voice of the Church and will stubbornly continue in his policy and pretend to the authority of the chief hierarch, then he of course will turn out to be a church rebel and schismatic.

Faithful laymen, like small children, with their own breasts are striving to protect from mockery and crude offenses their Mother, the Holy Church, which to all of us is dearer than life and freedom. But children are powerless. The fathers must step forth. You, archpastors and masters: upon you the Lord has placed the great responsibility for the fate of the Holy Church; to you has been entrusted its defense; you will give an answer to the Lord God for the souls of your spiritual children, for whom Christ died. To you is addressed the word of Christ, *I say unto you, My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye should fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast your soul into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him* (Luke 12:4-5).

The bonds of the servants of Christ serve to the greater success of the preaching of the Gospel, as it was also among the Apostles. *Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear. I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the cooperation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ* (Phil. 1:14, 18-19). May there be glory to Him in the Church unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Note (by the authors): In 1905, on February 17, at a moleben in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Metropolitan Sergius gave a talk about the time when the civil law would cease to be a defense and a firm wall for the Russian Church. "Then," prophesied our present leader, "they will demand of us not beautiful phrases, not memorized syllogisms, but spirit and life; they will demand faith, and flaming faithfulness, the penetration of the Spirit of Christ.

They will demand that we should write not with ink (and ink, it may be, borrowed from foreign inkwells at that), but with the blood of our own breasts. Will we answer to these demands, will we hold up under this fiery trial, will we endure at this truly frightful judgment? After all, it is not our well-wishing leadership that will judge us, and not we ourselves, but the Church of God itself will judge us, the Orthodox people itself which has entrusted to us the Church's work, and which without any pity will turn away from us, will cast us out, if it finds in us only a 'whited sepulchre' and a 'salt which has lost its savor' ".

Now there has begun upon us the judgment of the Holy Church. Will the well-founded prophetic words of Metropolitan Sergius be fulfilled? And first of all, will they be fulfilled in him?

Editor's Afterword (E. N. Lopeshanskaya)

No, his own prophetic words were not fulfilled in Metropolitan Sergius. He remained unharmed in the midst of the storm which surrounded him. He looked unfeelingly, indifferently on what was being done around him. Under the blows of hammers, there fell the age-old, irreplaceable holy things of Orthodoxy in the Russian land. Beyond the polar circle and in the sands of Turkestan vanished those whom he knew, with whom he studied, with whom he stood before the Altar, who, going to Golgotha, cast at him the reproach of betraying the Church. He outlived everything, even his own Declaration, which remained a piece of paper.

In the same way, the brother bishops, Bishops Pachomius of Chernigov and Abercius of Zhitomir, disappeared in the Soviet vastnesses. Of them there remains only this Epistle. He who will read it heedfully, entering deeply into every word, will clearly place before himself both their sufferings, and their flaming faith, and their unwavering firmness. Their struggle is all the higher in that they saw ahead the ever more thickly gathering clouds, and the approaching great storm which was gathering against the whole Christian world.

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(IN RUSSIAN)

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